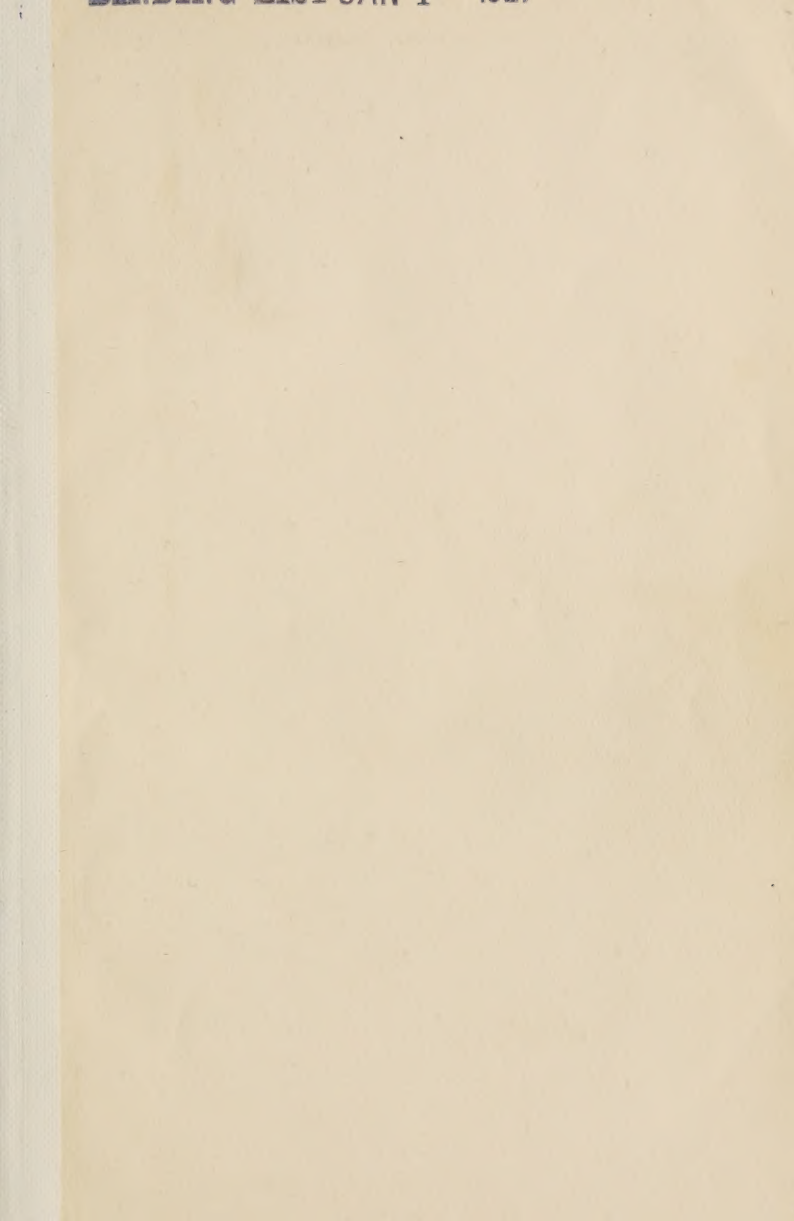





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THE
ORESTEIA OF AESCHYLUS

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The Oresteia of Aeschylus
Agamemnon, Choephoroi, Eumenides

THE GREEK TEXT

as arranged for performance at Cambridge

WITH

AN ENGLISH VERSE TRANSLATION

BY

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Trinity College

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In arranging the text of the *Oresteia* for performance, the editor has endeavoured to preserve the balance of the composition, due regard being had to the fact that the modern orchestra enables the producer to obtain his lyrical effects more rapidly than was possible with the simpler ancient music. Though much has inevitably been sacrificed which he would have been glad to retain, he hopes that the *Trilogy*, as now arranged, will not appear to the reader to have become a series of disjointed episodes.

The text owes much to the critical work of the late Dr Walter Headlam. For two choral odes in the *Eumenides* (pp. 134 ff. and 140 ff.), the verse translation composed by the late Dr A. W. Verrall for an earlier performance of the *Eumenides* has been retained.

Mr R. C. Trevelyan's verse translation, which, by his generous permission, is now printed for the first time, follows the original line for line, and aims at reproducing the metrical pattern of Greek in the lyrical parts.

The music for the Cambridge performance has been composed by Mr C. Armstrong Gibbs. The vocal score will shortly be published by Messrs Goodwin and Tabb, Ltd.

J. T. S.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AGAMEMNON, *King of Argos, son of Atreus.*

CLYTAEMNESTRA, *his wife.*

ORESTES, *his son.*

ELECTRA, *his daughter.*

ÆGISTHUS, *his cousin and enemy, paramour of Clytaem-
nestra.*

PYLADES, *son of Strophius, friend of Orestes.*

CASSANDRA, *daughter of Priam, King of Troy.*

A WATCHMAN, *loyal to Agamemnon.*

HERALD *of Agamemnon.*

NURSE *of Orestes.*

SERVANT *of Ægisthus.*

PYTHIAN PROPHETESS.

APOLLO.

ATHENE.

HERMES.

CHORUS of ARGIVE ELDERS, TROJAN BONDWOMEN, and
FURIES.

*Retinue of Agamemnon, Women attendant on Clytaemnestra,
Bodyguard of Ægisthus, Areopagites, Athenian
Women, etc.*

THE AGAMEMNON
OF
AESCHYLUS

THE AGAMEMNON

Before the royal palace at Argos. Night.

WATCHMAN

The Gods have I besought for my release
This whole long year of vigil, wherein couched
On the Atreidae's roof on bent arms, dogwise,
I have learnt the nightly sessions of the stars,
Those chiefly that bring storm and heat to men,
The bright conspicuous dynasts of the sky.
Still am I watching for the signal flame,
A beam of fire carrying news from Troy
And tidings of its capture: so dictates
A woman's sanguine heart to a man's will joined.
Now when upon my restless dew-damp couch
I have laid me down, this bed of mine where dreams
Haunt not: for fear instead of sleep stands by—
Oft as I have a mind to sing or hum,
A tune in slumber's stead by way of salve,
Then do I weep the fortunes of this house
No more so wisely managed as of old.
But now blessed release from toil be mine,
And the fire's happy tidings shine through gloom.

Oh hail, thou lamp, that dawnest on the night
Like daybreak, heralding in Argos many
A choral dance for joy at this good hap!
Ioû! Ioû!

THE AGAMEMNON

Before the royal palace at Argos. Night.

ΦΥΛΑΞ

Θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χεῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς 5
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι·
καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τὸ σύμβολον,
αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσιν ἐκ Τροίας φάτιν
ἀλώσιμόν τε βάξιν· ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ
γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ. 10
εὔτ' ἂν δὲ νυκτίπλαγκτον ἔνδροσόν τ' ἔχω
εὐνὴν ὀνείροις οὐκ ἐπισκοπουμένην
ἐμήν· φόβος γὰρ ἀνθ' ὕπνου παραστατεῖ·
ὅταν δ' αἰεῖδεν ἢ μινύρεσθαι δοκῶ,
ὕπνου τόδ' ἀντίμολπον ἐντέμνων ἄκος, 15
κλαίω τότε οἴκου τοῦδε συμφορὰν στένων
οὐχ ὥς τὰ πρόσθ' ἄριστα διαπονουμένου.
νῦν δ' εὐτυχὴς γένοιτ' ἀπαλλαγὴ πόνων
εὐαγγέλου φανέντος ὀρφναίου πυρός.

ὦ χαῖρε λαμπτήρ, νυκτὸς ἡμερήσιον 20
φάος πιφαύσκων καὶ χορῶν κατάστασιν
πολλῶν ἐν Ἀργεῖ, τῇσδε συμφορᾶς χάριν.
ιοὺν ἰοῦ.

Agamemnon's queen thus loudly do I summon
To arise from her couch and lift within
The house forthwith a shout of holy joy
To greet yon light, if verily Ilium's town
Be captured, as the announcing beacon boasts.
For the rest I keep silence: on my tongue
A great ox treads: though, had it speech, this house
Might tell a plain tale. I, for folk who know,
Speak gladly: for know-nothings I forget.

[*Exit* WATCHMAN. CLYTAEMNESTRA'S *cry of triumph*
is heard within. *Enter* CHORUS OF ELDERS.]

CHORUS

'Tis the tenth year now since Priam's mighty
Avenging foe,
Meneläus, and king Agamemnon too,
From the shores of Greece launched forth with a
Argive crews [thousand
United in armed federation.
Loud rang their wrathful warcry forth,
As the scream of vultures robbed of their young,
When in mountain solitudes over their eyrie
They wheel and circle
With endless beating of oarlike wings,
Reft of the nestlings
Their watchful labour had tended.
But above there is one, be it Apollo,
Or Pan, or Zeus, who hearing the shrill
Sad cry of those birds, his suppliant wards,
Shall one day send
Retribution upon the offenders.
Unsolved the event
Still waiteth: and yet to an issue is moving.

Ἄγαμέμνωνος γυναικὶ σημαίνω τορῶς
 εὐνῆς ἐπαντείλασαν ὡς τάχος δόμοις 25
 ὀλολυγμὸν εὐφημοῦντα τῇδε λαμπάδι
 ἐπορθιάζειν, εἴπερ Ἴλίου πόλις
 ἐάλωκεν, ὡς ὁ φρυκτὸς ἀγγέλλων πρέπει·
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα σιγῶ· βοῦς ἐπὶ γλώσση μέγας
 βέβηκεν· οἶκος δ' αὐτός, εἰ φθογγὴν λάβοι, 30
 σαφέστατ' ἂν λέξειεν· ὡς ἐκὼν ἐγὼ
 μαθοῦσιν αὐδῶ κοῦ μαθοῦσι λήθομαι.

[Exit WATCHMAN. CLYTAEMNESTRA'S cry of triumph is heard within. Enter CHORUS OF ELDERS.]

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δέκατον μὲν ἔτος τόδ' ἐπεὶ Πριάμου
 μέγας ἀντίδικος,
 Μενέλαος ἄναξ ἡδ' Ἀγαμέμνων, 35
 στόλον Ἀργείων χιλιοναύτην
 τῆσδ' ἀπὸ χώρας
 ἦραν, στρατιῶτιν ἄρωγῆν,
 μέγαν ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη
 τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν, οἷτ' ἐκπατίοις 40
 ἄλγεσι παίδων ὑπατηλεχέων
 στροφοδινοῦνται
 πτερύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι,
 δεμνιοτήρη
 πόνον ὀρταλίχων ὀλέσαντες· 45
 ὕπατος δ' αἶων ἢ τις Ἀπόλλων
 ἢ Πᾶν ἢ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθροον
 γόον ὄξυβόαν τῶνδε μετοίκων,
 ὑστερόποινον
 πέμπει παραβᾶσιν Ἐρινύν. 50
 ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
 ἔστι· τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον·

Neither oil poured over nor fire lit beneath
Shall temper the stubborn
Wrath for the sacrifice unburnt.

[*Enter* CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

But thou, O daughter
Of Tyndareus, Clytaemnestra, Queen,
What hath chanced? What tidings have reached
That at every shrine [thine ears,
Thou commandest ritual oblations?
And of all those Gods that frequent our town,
From on high, from beneath,
Whether heavenly sublime, or of earthlier power,
Glowing with gifts are the altars.
And on all sides one by one bright flames
Skyward are leaping,
Medicined and nursed by the innocent spell
And soft persuasion of hallowed gums,
Rich unguent stored for a King's use.
Hereof what can and may be revealed
Deign thou to declare,
And so be the healer of this my doubt,
Which now to an evil boding sinks,
But anon from the sacrifice Hope grown kind
Drives back from the soul those ravening thoughts,
That grief that gnaws at the heart-roots.
I am come, Clytaemnestra, reverencing
Thy will; for it is just that we should honour
The sovereign's wife, when the throne lacks its lord.
Now whether certified, or but in hope
Of happy news, thou makest sacrifice,
Fain would I know; yet shall not grudge thee silence.

οὐθ' ὑποκαίων οὐτ' ἐπιλείβων
 ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
 ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει.

55

[Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

σὺ δέ, Τυνδάρεω
 θύγατερ, βασίλεια Κλυταιμῆστρα,
 τί χρέος; τί νέον; τί δ' ἐπαισθομένη,
 τίνος ἀγγελίας

 πευθοῖ περίπεμπτα θυοσκεῖς; 60

πάντων δὲ θεῶν τῶν ἀστυνόμων,
 ὑπάτων, χθονίων,

τῶν τ' οὐρανίων τῶν τ' ἀγοραίων,

 βωμοὶ δώροισι φλέγονται·

ἄλλη δ' ἄλλοθεν οὐρανομήκης 65

λαμπὰς ἀνίσχει,

φαρμασσομένη χρίματος ἀγνοῦ
 μαλακαῖς ἀδόλοισι παρηγορίαις,

 πελάνφ' μυχόθεν βασιλείῳ.

τούτων λέξασ' ὅ τι καὶ δυνατὸν 70

καὶ θέμις αἰνεῖν,

παιῶν τε γενοῦ τῇσδε μερίμνης,

ἢ νῦν τοτὲ μὲν κακόφρων τελέθει,

τότε δ' ἐκ θυσιῶν τὴν θυμοβόρον

φροντίδ' ἄπληστον 75

φαίνουσ' ἀγάν' ἐλπὶς ἀμύνει.

ἦκω σεβίζων σόν, Κλυταιμῆστρα, κράτος·

δίκη γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς ἀρχηγοῦ τίειν

γυναικ' ἐρημωθέντος ἄρσεως θρόνου.

σὺ δ' εἴ τι κεδνὸν εἴτε μὴ πεπυσμένη 80

εὐαγγέλοισιν ἐλπίσιν θυηπολεῖς,

κλύοιμ' ἂν εὐφρων· οὐδὲ σιγῶσῃ φθόνος.

CLYTAEMNESTRA

With happy tidings, so the proverb runs,
May the dawn issue from her mother night.
But hear now joy greater than any hope:
For the Argives have captured Priam's town.

Ch. How sayst thou? I scarce heard through unbelief.

Cl. The Achaeans now hold Troy. Do I speak plain?

Ch. Joy overwhelms me, calling forth a tear.

Cl. Thine eye convicts thee of a loyal joy.

Ch. But where's thy warrant? Hast thou proof of this?

Cl. I have. Why not? Unless a God deceives me.

Ch. Dost thou respect a dream's delusive phantoms?

Cl. A drowsing mind's fancy I should not utter.

Ch. Hath some vague unwingéd rumour cheered thy soul?

Cl. My wits thou wouldst disparage like a girl's.

Ch. How long then is it since the town was sacked?

Cl. This very night that gives birth to yon dawn.

Ch. And what messenger could arrive so speedily?

Cl. Hephaestus, from Ida flinging the bright glare.

Then beacon hitherward with posting flame

Sped beacon; Ida first to Hermes' rock

On Lemnos; from whose isle Athos, the peak

Of Zeus, was third to accept the mighty brand;

Nor did the watch deny the far-spiced glow,

But made their bonfire higher than was enjoined.

Then over lake Gorgopis the beam shot,

And having reached mount Aigiplanctus, there

Urged swift performance of the fiery rite.

Kindling they launch with generous energy

A mighty beard of flame which could o'erpass

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

εὐάγγελός μέν, ὥσπερ ἡ παροιμία,
ἕως γένοιτο μητρὸς εὐφρόνης πάρα.

πεύσει δὲ χάρμα μεῖζον ἐλπίδος κλύειν· 85

Πριάμου γὰρ ἡρήκασιν Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν.

Χο. πῶς φῆς; πέφευγε τοῦπος ἐξ ἀπιστίας.

Κλ. Τροίαν Ἀχαιῶν οὖσαν· ἡ τορῶς λέγω;

Χο. χαρά μ' ὑφέρπει δάκρυον ἐκκαλουμένη.

Κλ. εὖ γὰρ φρονούντος ὄμμα σοῦ κατηγορεῖ. 90

Χο. τί γὰρ τὸ πιστόν; ἔστι τῶνδ' εἰ σοι τέκμαρ;

Κλ. ἔστιν· τί δ' οὐχί; μὴ δολώσαντος θεοῦ.

Χο. πότῃ δ' οὐνείρων φύσματ' εὐπιθῇ σέβεις;

Κλ. οὐ δόξαν ἂν λάκοιμι βριζούσης φρενός.

Χο. ἀλλ' ἡ σ' ἐπιάνέν τις ἄπτερος φάτις; 95

Κλ. παιδὸς νέας ὥς κάρτ' ἐμωμήσω φρένας.

Χο. ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις;

Κλ. τῆς νῦν τεκούσης φῶς τόδ' εὐφρόνης λέγω.

Χο. καὶ τίς τόδ' ἐξίκοιτ' ἂν ἀγγέλων τάχος;

Κλ. Ἡφαιστος Ἰδης λαμπρὸν ἐκπέμπων σέλας. 100

φρυκτὸς δὲ φρυκτὸν δεῦρ' ἀπ' ἀγγάρου πυρὸς

ἔπεμπεν· Ἰδη μὲν πρὸς Ἑρμαῖον λέπας

Λήμνου· μέγαν δὲ παιὸν ἐκ νήσου τρίτον

Ἀθῶν αἶπος Ζηνὸς ἐξεδέξατο.

φάος δὲ τηλέπομπον οὐκ ἡναίνετο 105

φρουρὰ πλέον καίουσα τῶν εἰρημένων,

λίμνην δ' ὑπὲρ Γοργῶπιι ἔσκηψεν φάος·

ὄρος τ' ἐπ' Αἰγίπλαγκτον ἐξικνούμενον

ὥτρυνε θεσμὸν μὴ χρονίζεσθαι πυρός.

πέμπουσι δ' ἀνδαίοντες ἀφθόνη μένει 110

φλογὸς μέγαν πώγωνα, καὶ Σαρωνικοῦ

The cliff that frowns o'er the Saronic gulf
Far flaring: then it alighted, then it reached
Arachne's sentinel peak, our city's neighbour.
And last here on the Atreidae's roof comes home
This light, true-fathered heir of Ida's fire.

These are the stages of my torch-racers,
Thus in succession each from each fulfilled.
But he's the winner who ran from first to last.
Such is the proof and token that I give thee,
This message sped to me by my lord from Troy.

Ch. Lady, the Gods hereafter would I praise.

But first would I fain satisfy my wonder
Hearing thy tale from point to point retold.

Cl. This day do the Achaeans possess Troy.

'Tis loud, I ween, with cries that blend not well.
Pour vinegar and oil in the same cruse,
And you would say they sundered without love.
Even so the cries of conquerors and captives
Sound distinct as their differing fortunes are.
These falling around the bodies of their husbands
And brothers slain, children it may be clasping
Gray-headed sires, from throats no longer free
Bewail the fate of those whom most they loved;
While these a weary night of roving sends
Hungry from battle to whatever fare
The town affords, not marshalled orderly,
Rather, as each has snatched his lot of luck,
Within the captured palaces of Troy
They are housing now, delivered from the frosts
And dews of the bare sky; and blessedly
Without watch will they sleep the whole night long.
Now if they show due reverence to the Gods

πορθμοῦ κάτοπτον πρῶν' ὑπερβάλλειν πρόσω
 φλέγουσαν· εἴτ' ἔσκηψεν, εἴτ' ἀφίκετο
 Ἀραχναῖον αἶπος, ἀστυγείτονας σκοπᾶς·
 κᾶπειτ' Ἀτρειδῶν ἐς τόδε σκίηπτει στέγος 115
 φάος τόδ' οὐκ ἄπαππον Ἰδαίου πυρός.

τοιοῖδε τοί μοι λαμπαδηφόρων νόμοι,
 ἄλλος παρ' ἄλλου διαδοχαῖς πληρούμενοι·
 νικᾷ δ' ὁ πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖος δραμών.
 τέκμαρ τοιοῦτο σύμβολόν τε σοὶ λέγω 120
 ἀνδρὸς παραγγείλαντος ἐκ Τροίας ἐμοί.

Χο. θεοῖς μὲν αὖθις, ὦ γύναι, προσεύξομαι.
 λόγους δ' ἀκοῦσαι τούσδε κάποθαυμάσαι
 διηνεκῶς θέλοιμ' ἂν ὡς λέγοις πάλιν.

Κλ. Τροίαν Ἀχαιοὶ τῇδ' ἔχουσ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ. 125
 οἶμαι βοὴν ἄμικτον ἐν πόλει πρέπειν.
 ὄξος τ' ἄλειφά τ' ἐγχείας ταῦτῳ κύτει
 διχοστατοῦντ' ἄν, οὐ φίλῳ, προσεινέποις.
 καὶ τῶν ἀλόντων καὶ κρατησάντων δίχα
 φθογγὰς ἀκούειν ἔστι συμφορᾶς διπλῆς. 130

οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀμφὶ σώμασιν πεπτωκότες
 ἀνδρῶν κασιγνήτων τε καὶ φυταλμίων
 παῖδες γερόντων οὐκέτ' ἐξ ἐλευθέρου
 δέρης ἀποιμώζουσιν φιλτάτων μόρον·
 τοὺς δ' αὖτε νυκτίπλαγκτος ἐκ μάχης πόνος 135

νήστεις πρὸς ἀρίστοισιν ὧν ἔχει πόλις
 τάσσει, πρὸς οὐδὲν ἐν μέρει τεκμήριον,
 ἀλλ' ὡς ἕκαστος ἔσπασεν τύχης πῖλον,
 ἐν αἰχμαλώτοις Τρωικοῖς οἰκήμασιν
 ναίουσιν ἤδη, τῶν ὑπαιθρίων πάγων 140

δρόσων τ' ἀπαλλαχθέντες, ὥς δ' εὐδαίμονες
 ἀφύλακτον εὐδήσουσι πᾶσαν εὐφρόνην.
 εἰ δ' εὖ σέβουσιν τοὺς πολισσούχους θεοὺς

That guard the conquered land, and spare their shrines,
Then may the spoilers not in turn be spoiled.
But let no ill-timed lust assail the host
Mastered by greed to plunder what they ought not.
For they have need to win safe passage home.
And if the returning host escape Heaven's wrath,
The hatred of the dead might haply grow
Less hostile—if no sudden ill befall.
To such fears I, a woman, must give voice.

Yet may good triumph manifestly past doubt;
Of many blessings now would I taste the fruit.

Ch. Lady, sober like a wise man's is thy speech.

Now, having heard proof so trustworthy from thee,
I will address myself to thank the Gods.
Their grace is recompense for all our toils.

[*Exit* CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

O sovereign Zeus! O gracious Night,
Who hast won so measureless a glory!
Who over the towers of Troy didst cast
Such a close-drawn net, that none of the great,
Nor yet of the young should escape the immense
Ensnaring mesh
Of thralldom and doom universal.
Zeus, God of guest-right, great I confess him,
Who hath wrought this vengeance; against Alexander
His bow did he hold long bent, that neither
Short of the mark his bolt should alight,
Nor beyond the stars speed idly.

From Zeus came the stroke that felled them: yea that
Is sure truth: clearly may we trace it.
As He determined, so they fared. The fool said,

τοὺς τῆς ἀλούσης γῆς θεῶν θ' ἰδρύματα,
οὐ τὰν ἐλόντες αὖθις ἀνθαλοῖεν ἄν. 145

ἔρως δὲ μή τις πρότερον ἐμπίπτῃ στρατῷ
πορθεῖν ἂ μὴ χρεῖ, κέρδεσιν νικωμένους.
δεῖ γὰρ πρὸς οἴκους νοστίμου σωτηρίας·
θεοῖς δ' ἀναμπλάκητος εἰ μόλοι στρατός,
εὐήγορον τὸ πῆμα τῶν ὀλωλότων 150

γένοντ' ἄν—εἰ πρόσπαια μὴ τύχοι κακά.
τοιαῦτά τοι γυναικὸς ἐξ ἐμοῦ κλύεις·
τὸ δ' εὖ κρατοίῃ, μὴ διχορρόπως ἰδεῖν.
πολλῶν γὰρ ἐσθλῶν τὴν ὄνησιν εἰλόμην.

Χο. γύναι, κατ' ἄνδρα σῶφρον' εὐφρόνως λέγεις. 155
ἐγὼ δ' ἀκούσας πιστά σου τεκμήρια
θεοὺς προσειπεῖν αὖ παρασκευάζομαι.
χάρις γὰρ οὐκ ἄτιμος εἴργασται πόνων.

[Exit CLYTEMNESTRA.]

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ καὶ νύξ φιλία
μεγάλων κόσμων κτεάτειρα, 160
ἥτ' ἐπὶ Τροίας πύργοις ἔβαλες
στεγανὸν δίκτυον, ὥς μήτε μέγαν
μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι
μέγα δουλείας

γάγαμον, ἄτης παναλώτου. 165
Δία τοι ξένιον μέγαν αἰδοῦμαι
τὸν τάδε πράξαντ' ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ
τείνοντα πάλαι τόξον, ὅπως ἂν
μήτε πρὸ καιροῦ μήθ' ὑπὲρ ἄστρων
βέλος ἡλίθιον σκήψειεν. 170

Ἰδὸς πλαγὰν ἔχουσιν' εἰπεῖν [στρ. α.
πάρεστιν, τοῦτό τ' ἐξιχνεύσαι.
ἔπραξαν ὥς ἔκρανεν. οὐκ ἔφα τις

"The Gods above heed not when the loveliness
Of sanctity is trampled down
By mortals." Oh blasphemy!
'Tis plain now and manifest
The wage paid for reckless sin,
The doom due to insolent presumption,
Whene'er in kings' houses wealth superfluous
Beyond the mean teemeth. Yea, let there be
What contents without want
Soberly minded wisdom.

No strong fortress against fate
Hath that man who in wealth's pride
Spurns from sight as a thing of naught
The mighty altar of Justice.

Yet strong is that obstinate Temptation,
The dire child of fore-designing Ate.
Then all in vain is remedy: unhidden
The mischief glows: baleful is the gleam thereof.
Like metal base, touched and rubbed
By a testing stone, even so
In him too trial reveals
A black stain. Like a child
A winged bird vainly he pursueth.
A dire taint lays he on all his people.
To prayers the Gods' ears are deaf. Whosoe'er
Even consorts with such men,
Shares in their guilt and ruin.

Even so Paris, a house-guest
Honoured by the Atreidae,
Did foul wrong to his host's board
By his theft of a woman.

θεοὺς βροτῶν ἀξιουῖσθαι μέλιν
 ὅσοις ἀθίκτων χάρις 175
 πατοῖθ'· ὁ δ' οὐκ εὖσεβής.
 πέφανται δ' ἐκτίνου-
 σ' ἀτολμήτων ἀρά,
 πνεόντων μεῖζον ἢ δικαίως,
 φλεόντων δωμάτων ὑπέρφεν 180
 ὑπὲρ τὸ βέλτιστον. ἔστω δ' ἀπή-
 μαντον, ὥστ' ἀπαρκεῖν
 εὖ πραπίδων λαχόντα.
 οὐ ἔστιν γὰρ ἑπαλξίς
 πλούτου πρὸς κόρον ἀνδρὶ 185
 λακτίσαντι μέγαν Δίκας
 βωμὸν εἰς ἀφάνειαν.

βιᾶται δ' ἅ τάλαινα Πειθώ, [ἀντ. α.
 προβούλου παῖς ἄφερτος Ἄτας.
 ἄκος δὲ παμμάταιον. οὐκ ἐκρύφθη, 190
 πρέπει δέ, φῶς αἰνολαμπές, σίνος·
 κακοῦ δὲ χαλκοῦ τρόπον
 τρίβω τε καὶ προσβολαῖς
 μελαμπαγῆς πέλει
 δικαιωθείς, ἐπεὶ 195
 διώκει παῖς ποτανὸν ὄρνιν,
 πόλει πρόστριμμ' ἄφερτον ἐνθείς.
 λιτᾶν δ' ἀκούει μὲν οὔτις θεῶν·
 τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον τῶν
 φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ. 200
 οἶος καὶ Πάρις ἐλθὼν
 ἐς δόμον τὸν Ἀτρειδᾶν
 ἥσχυνε ξενίαν τράπε-
 ζαν κλοπαῖσι γυναικός.

Bequeathing to her countrymen noise of shields
Together clashed, thronging spears, stir of vessels
arming,

And bearing death instead of dower to Ilium,
With light step through the gates she is flown
On reckless venture. Sore the wailing then
Throughout the halls, doleful voices crying:
"Ah home of woe! Home and woeful princes, wail!
Ah woeful bed, printed yet with love's embrace!
Behold the spouse! Bowed with shame, there he sits
In silent unreviling grief. [apart

For her beyond seas he yearns:
Pined with dreams sits he, a sceptred phantom.

Hateful now to his mood seems
The grace of loveliest statues.
Lost the light of her eyes, and lost
Now the love they enkindled.

Anon there come dream-revealed semblances,
Beguiling shapes. Brief the joy, vain the sweet de-
lusion.

For vainly, when he seems to view the phantom bliss,
Between his arms, lo! the vision is flown
And vanishes away beyond recall
On shadowy wings down the paths of slumber."
Beside the hearth, within the royal palace, such
The grief that haunts, yea and woes transcending these.
But for the host, all who once launched from Hellas'
Some woman now with suffering heart [shore,
In every house mourning sits.

Wounds enough pierce them to the soul's core.

Whom they sent to the war, them

λιποῦσα δ' ἀστοῖσιν ἀσπίστορας [στρ. β. 205
 κλόνους τε καὶ λογχίμους
 ναυβάτας θ' ὀπλισμούς,
 ἄγουσά τ' ἀντίφεριον Ἰλίῳ φθορὰν
 βέβακεν ῥίμφα διὰ πυλᾶν
 ἄτλητα τλᾶσα· πολλὰ δ' ἔστενον 210
 τόδ' ἐννέποντες δόμων προφήται·
 'ὶὼ ἰὼ δῶμα δῶμα καὶ πρόμοι,
 ἰὼ λέχος καὶ στίβοι φιλάνορες.
 πάρεστι σιγὰς ἀτίμους ἀλοιδόρους
 ἄλγιστ' ἀφημένων ἰδεῖν. 215
 πόθῳ δ' ὑπερποντίας
 φάσμα δόξει δόμων ἀνάσσειν.
 εὐμόρφων δὲ κολοσσῶν
 ἔχθεται χάρις ἀνδρί·
 ὀμμάτων δ' ἐν ἀχηνίαις 220
 ἔρρει πᾶσ' Ἀφροδίτα.

ὄνειρόφαντοι δὲ πειθήμονες [ἀντ. β.
 πάρεισι δόξαι φέρου-
 σαι χάριν ματαίαν.
 μάταν γάρ, εὐτ' ἂν ἐσθλά τις δοκῶν ὀράῃ— 225
 παραλλάξασα διὰ χερῶν,
 βέβακεν ὄψις οὐ μεθύστερον
 πτεροῖς ὀπαδοῦσ' ὕπνου κελεύθοις·
 τὰ μὲν κατ' οἴκους ἐφ' ἐστίας ἄχῃ
 τάδ' ἐστὶ καὶ τῶνδ' ὑπερβατώτερα. 230
 τὸ πᾶν δ' ἀφ' Ἑλλανος αἴας συνορμένοις
 πενθεῖ' ἀτλησικάρδιος
 δόμων ἐκάστου πρέπει.
 πολλὰ γοῦν θιγγάνει πρὸς ἡπαρ.
 οὓς μὲν γάρ τις ἔπεμψεν 235

They know: but now in the man's stead
Naught comes back to the home of each
Save an urn and some ashes.

The merchant Ares—dead men's bodies are his go'd—
He whose scales weigh the poisoning fate of war,
From pyres beneath Ilium
To those that loved them sendeth home
Heavy sore-lamented dust,
Stowing ash that once was man
Into the compass of a jar.
Then mourning each they tell his praise,
How one in craft of war was skilled,
How that one nobly shed his blood,—
“All for a woman, wife to another,”
So an angry whisper snarls forth;
And against the sons of Atreus
An accusing grief spreads.
Others under the wall, slain
In their beauty, possess graves
There 'neath Ilian earth, that now
Hides in hate her possessors.

A people's talk, charged with wrath, is perilous.
Oft 'tis proved potent as a public curse.
My boding heart waits to hear
Some news that night shroudeth still.
For on men of blood the Gods'
Eyes are fixed; and late or soon
Will the dark Erinues doom
The man who thrives unrighteously
To waste and dwindle luckless down,
Until his light be quenched: and once

οἶδεν, ἀντὶ δὲ φωτῶν
τεύχη καὶ σποδὸς εἰς ἑκά-
στου δόμους ἀφικνεῖται.

ὁ χρυσαμοιβὸς δ' Ἄρης σωμάτων [στρ. γ.
καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχῃ δορὸς 240

πυρωθὲν ἐξ Ἰλίου
φίλοισι πέμπει βαρὺ
ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον ἀν-
τήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-
ζων λέβητας εὐθέτους. 245

στένουσι δ' εὖ λέγοντες ἄν-
δρα τὸν μὲν ὡς μάχης ἴδρις,
τὸν δ' ἐν φοναῖς καλῶς πεσόντ'—
' ἄλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναικός·'
τάδε σῖγά τις βαῦζει· 250
φθονερὸν δ' ὑπ' ἄλγος ἔρπει
προδίκους Ἀτρεΐδαις.

οἱ δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τείχος
θήκας Ἰλιάδος γᾶς
εὖμορφοι κατέχουσιν· ἐ- 255
χθρὰ δ' ἔχοντας ἔκρυψεν.

βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις ξὺν κότῳ· [ἀντ. γ.
δημοκράντου δ' ἀρᾶς τίνει χρέος.
μένει δ' ἀκοῦσαί τί μου
μέριμνα νυκτηρεφές. 260

τῶν πολυκτόνων γὰρ οὐκ
ἄσκοποι θεοί. κελαι-
ναὶ δ' Ἐρινύες χρόνῳ
τυχηρὸν ὄντ' ἄνευ δίκας
παλιντυχεῖ τριβᾷ βίου 265
τιθεῖσ' ἀμαυρόν, ἐν δ' αἰ-

Lost in the darkness, who shall help him?
In excess of glory is peril.
For on mortals overweening
Are the bolts of Zeus sped.
Mine be fortune unenvied.
No walled towns would I conquer,
Nor yet live to behold my age
Slave to alien masters.

[*Enter a HERALD.*]

HERALD

O land of Argos, thou my native soil,
To thee this tenth-born year do I return,
Of many broken hopes still grasping one.
Ne'er could I dream here in this Argive earth
Dying to share that burial I so longed for.
O palace of our kings, beloved abode,
Ye solemn seats, and ye, dawn-fronting Deities,
If e'er of old, with radiant eyes this day
Welcome with pomp our king so long time gone.
For to you and to all these alike returns
Prince Agamemnon, bringing light in gloom.
Come, ye must greet him joyfully, as beseems,
Who with the mattock of Avenging Zeus
Hath digged down Troy, and ploughed her soil to dust.
Having laid on Troy so fell a yoke, the elder
Of Atreus' children, fortunate among princes,
Returns, of all men living worthiest praise.

Ch. Joy to thee, herald of the Achæan host!

Her. Joy is mine. Now let me die, if heaven so wills.

Ch. Hath longing for thy fatherland so tortured thee?

Her. So that for joy mine eyes weep tears upon it.

στοις τελέθοντος οὔτις ἀλκά·
 τὸ δ' ὑπερκόπως κλύειν εὖ
 βαρύ· βάλλεται γὰρ ὅσσοις
 Διόθεν κεραυνός.
 κρίνω δ' ἄφθονον ὄλβον·
 μήτ' εἶην πτολιπόρθης
 μήτ' οὖν αὐτὸς ἀλούς ὑπ' ἄλ-
 λῳ βίον κατίδοιμι.

270

[Enter a HERALD.]

ΚΗΡΥΞ

ἰὼ πατρῶον οὔδας Ἀργείας χθονός,
 δεκάτῳ σε φέγγει τῷδ' ἀφικόμην ἔτους,
 πολλῶν ῥαγισῶν ἐλπίδων μιᾷς τυχών.
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἠὔχουν τῇδ' ἐν Ἀργείᾳ χθονὶ
 θανὼν μεθέξειν φιλτάτου τάφου μέρος.
 ἰὼ μέλαθρα βασιλέων, φίλαι στέγαι,
 σεμνοὶ τε θᾶκοι, δαίμονές τ' ἀντήλιοι,
 εἴ που πάλαι, παιδροῖσι τοισίδ' ὄμμασι
 δέξασθε κόσμῳ βασιλέα πολλῷ χρόνῳ.
 ἦκει γὰρ ὑμῖν φῶς ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φέρων
 καὶ τοῖσδ' ἅπασι κοινὸν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
 ἀλλ' εὖ νιν ἀσπάσασθε, καὶ γὰρ οὖν πρέπει,
 Τροίαν κατασκάψαντα τοῦ δικηφόρου
 Διὸς μακέλλῃ, τῇ κατείργασται πέδον.
 τοιόνδε Τροίᾳ περιβαλὼν ζευκτήριον
 ἄναξ Ἀτρεΐδης πρέσβυς εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ
 ἦκει, τίεσθαι δ' ἀξιώτατος βροτῶν.

275

280

285

290

Χο. κῆρυξ Ἀχαιῶν χαῖρε τῶν ἀπὸ στρατοῦ.
 Κη. χαίρω. τεθναῖν. οὐκέτ' ἀντερῶ θεοῖς.
 Χο. ἔρως πατρώας τῆσδε γῆς σ' ἐγύμνασεν.
 Κη. ὥστ' ἐνδακρύειν γ' ὄμμασιν χαρᾶς ὑπο.

295

Ch. Sweet then was the disease with which you languished.

Her. How so? Not yet do I understand your words.

Ch. Not unreturned was this thy yearning love.

Her. Our country pined then for its pining host?

Ch. Full oft with desolate heart we sighed for you.

Her. Whence came this gloom, clouding the host's return?

Ch. Silence I have long used, as harm's best cure.

Her. How so? The kings being gone, didst thou fear
someone?

Ch. As thou didst say but now, 'twere joy to die.

Her. Because the event is well: though in all those years

Much may we reckon prosperously sped,

And much deplorably. Who save a God

May abide scathless everlastingly?

Were I to cite our hardships and ill-lodgings,

Comfortless berths on narrow decks—and what

Did we not lack by day, poor groaning wretches?

And then on land—there it was worse distress,

Bivouacked close beneath the enemy's walls:

Down from the sky, and from the fenny ground

Rained drizzling dews, a never-ceasing plague,

Making our hairy garments full of vermin.

Or should I tell of that bird-killing cold,

Unbearable winter gusts from Ida's snows,

Or of the heat, when in his noontide couch

Windless and waveless the sea sank to rest—

But what need to complain? Past is that misery.

Past is it for the dead, that nevermore

Will they take trouble even to rise again.

For us, the relics of the Argive host,

The gain prevails, the injury is outweighed.

Ch. Cheerfully I accept defeat in argument.

Χο. *τερπνῆς ἄρ' ἦτε τῆσδ' ἐπήβολοι ἰόσου.*

Κη. *πῶς δῆ; διδαχθεὶς τοῦδε δεσπόσω λόγου.*

Χο. *τῶν ἀντερώντων ἰμέρω πεπληγμένοι.*

Κη. *ποθεῖν ποθοῦντα τήνδε γῆν στρατὸν λέγεις.*

Χο. *ὥς πόλλ' ἀμαυρᾶς ἐκ φρενὸς μ' ἀναστέρειν.* 300

Κη. *πόθεν τὸ δύσφρον τοῦτ' ἐπῆν, στύγος στρατῶ;*

Χο. *πάσαι τὸ σιγᾶν φάρμακον βλάβης ἔχω.*

Κη. *καὶ πῶς; ἀπόντων κοιράνων ἔτρεις τινάς;*

Χο. *ὥς νῦν, τὸ σὸν δῆ, καὶ θανεῖν πολλὰ χάρις.*

Κη. *εὖ γὰρ πέπρακται. ταῦτα δ' ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ* 305

τὰ μὲν τις ἂν λέξειεν εὐπετῶς ἔχειν,

τὰ δ' αὖτε κἀπίμομφα. τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν

ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον;

μόχθους γὰρ εἰ λέγοιμι καὶ δυσανλίας

σπαρνὰς παρείξεις καὶ κακοστρώτους, τί δ' οὐ 310

στένοντες οὐ λαχόντες ἡματος μέρος;

τὰ δ' αὖτε χέρσῳ καὶ προσῆν πλέον στύγος·

εὐναὶ γὰρ ἦσαν δαΐων πρὸς τείχεσιν.

ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δὲ κἀπὸ γῆς λειμώνιαι

δρόσοι κατεψάκαζον, ἔμπεδον σῖνος, 315

ἐσθημάτων τιθέντες ἔνθηρον τρίχα.

χειμῶνα δ' εἰ λέγοι τις οἰωνοκτόνον,

οἶον παρείχ' ἄφερτον Ἰδαία χιῶν,

ἢ θάλπος, εὖτε πόντος ἐν μεσημβριναῖς

κοίταις ἀκύμων νηνέμοις εὖδοι πεσών— 320

τί ταῦτα πενθεῖν δεῖ; παροίχεται πόντος·

παροίχεται δέ, τοῖσι μὲν τεθνηκόσιν

τὸ μήποτ' αὖθις μηδ' ἀναστῆναι μέλειν.

ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς λοιποῖσιν Ἀργείων στρατοῦ

νικᾷ τὸ κέρδος, πῆμα δ' οὐκ ἀντιτρέπει. 325

Χο. *νικῶμενος λόγοισιν οὐκ ἀναίνομαι·*

Old age is always young enough to learn.

But the house and Clytaemnestra this news most
Should interest, and make me too rich in joy.

Cl. I lifted up a jubilant cry long since,
When first by night came that fire-messenger
Telling of Ilium's capture and destruction.
But thou, why tell the full tale now to me?
Soon from the king's self shall I learn it all.
Rather, that I may best make speed to welcome
My revered husband to his home, (for what
More sweet to a wife's eyes than that day's light,
When to her spouse, whom heaven has saved from war,
She unbars the gate?) this to my lord declare:
Let him speed hither to meet his people's love;
And at home may he find a faithful wife,
Even such as he left her, a house-dog kind
To him she loves, to ill-wishers a foe,
And in all else unchanged, ne'er having yet
Broken one seal in all that length of time.
No more of dalliance, (no, nor of scandal's breath,)
With another man do I know, than of dipping bronze.

[*Exit.*]

Her. Big is the boast, though weighted well with truth,
Scarce seemly for a noble wife to utter.

Ch. Thus to thine understanding hath she spoken,
Most—speciously—to shrewd interpreters.

[*A triumphal march. Enter AGAMEMNON,
KASSANDRA, etc.*]

Come now, O king, despoiler of Troy,
Offspring of Atreus!

How shall I hail thee? How pay thee homage,

αἰὲ γὰρ ἡβᾷ τοῖς γέρουσιν εὐμαθεῖν.
 δόμοις δὲ ταῦτα καὶ Κλυταιμῆστρα μέλειν
 εἰκὸς μάλιστα, σὺν δὲ πλουτίζειν ἐμέ.

- Κλ. ἀνωλόλυξα μὲν πάλαι χαρᾶς ὕπο, 330
 ὅτ' ἦλθ' ὁ πρῶτος νύχιος ἄγγελος πυρός,
 φράζων ἄλωσιν Ἰλίου τ' ἀνάστασιν.
 καὶ νῦν τὰ μάσσω μὲν τί δεῖ σέ μοι λέγειν ;
 ἄνακτος αὐτοῦ πάντα πεύσομαι λόγον.
 ὅπως δ' ἄριστα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰδοῖον πόσιν 335
 σπεύσω πάλιν μολόντα δέξασθαι—τί γὰρ
 γυναικὶ τούτου φέγγος ἥδιον δρακεῖν,
 ἀπὸ στρατείας ἀνδρὶ σώσαντος θεοῦ
 πύλας ἀνοῖξαι;—ταῦτ' ἀπάγγειλον πόσει·
 ἦκειν ὅπως τάχιστ' ἐράσμιον πόλει· 340
 γυναῖκα πιστὴν δ' ἐν δόμοις εὔροι μολῶν
 οἷανπερ οὖν ἔλειπε, δωμάτων κύνα
 ἐσθλὴν ἐκείνῳ, πολεμίαν τοῖς δύσφροσιν,
 καὶ τᾶλλ' ὁμοίαν πάντα, σημαντήριον
 οὐδὲν διαφθείρασαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου. 345
 οἷδ' οἶδα τέρψιν οὐδ' ἐπίψογον φάτιν
 ἄλλου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς μᾶλλον ἢ χαλκοῦ βαφῆς.

[Exit.]

- Κη. τοιόσδ' ὁ κόμπος τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων
 οἷκ αἰσχροὺς ὥς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν.
 Χο. αὕτη μὲν οὕτως εἶπε μανθάνοντί σοι 350
 τοροῖσιν ἐρμηνεύσιν εὐπρεπῶς λόγον.

[A triumphal march. Enter AGAMEMNON,
 KASSANDRA, etc.]

ἄγε δῆ, βασιλεῦ, Τροίας πτολίπορθ',
 Ἄτρῆως γένεθλον,
 πῶς σε προσείπω; πῶς σε σεβίζω

Neither o'ershooting, nor yet scanting
Due gratulation?
For most men practising outward shows
Hide thoughts perverse and unrighteous.
Sighs prompt and apt for another's mischance
Each hath in plenty; yet ne'er doth an unfeigned
Sting of anguish pierce to the heart-strings:
And copying the looks of those that rejoice
They compel their lips to a counterfeit smile.
Yet should the wisely discerning shepherd
Ne'er be deceived by the eyes of fawners,
That dissembling a loyal and cordial love
Flatter him with watery affection.
And of old when thou wast levying war
For Helen's sake, then, I deny not,
Graceless indeed was the image I formed of thee;
Ill-steered did thy wits seem thus to be spending
The life-blood of heroes
To redeem a consenting adulteress.
But now we greet thee with heart-deep love.
Happy endings make happy labours.

[*Enter* CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

Thou by inquisition erelong shalt learn
Whose stewardship of thy state is now
Proved faithful, and whose unfaithful.

AGAMEMNON

First to Argos and her native Gods my prayers
Are due, since they have aided my return,
And the Justice I have wreaked upon the town
Of Priam. For the Gods, when they had heard
Our voiceless plea, into the vase of blood

μήθ' ὑπερίρας μήθ' ὑποκάμψας
 355
 καιρὸν χάριτος ;
 πολλοὶ δὲ βροτῶν τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι
 προτίουσι δίκην παραβάντες.
 τῷ δυσπραγοῦντι δ' ἐπιστενάχειν
 πᾶς τις ἔτοιμος· δῆγμα δὲ λύπης
 360
 οὐδὲν ἐφ' ἧπαρ πρόσικνεῖται·
 καὶ ξυγχαίρουσιν ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς
 ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι.
 ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
 οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
 365
 τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὖφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
 ὕδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότῃτι.
 σὺ δέ μοι τότε μὲν στέλλων στρατιὰν
 Ἑλένης ἔνεκ', οὐκ ἐπικεύσω,
 κάρτ' ἀπομούσως ἦσθα γεγραμμένος,
 370
 οὐδ' εὖ πραπίδων οἶακα νέμων
 θάρσος ἐκούσιον
 ἀνδράσι θνήσκουσι κομίζων.
 νῦν δ' οὐκ ἀπ' ἄκρας φρενὸς οὐδ' ἀφίλως
 εὖφρων πόνος εὖ τελέεσασιν.
 375

[Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

γνώσει δὲ χρόνῳ διαπευθόμενος
 τὸν τε δικαίως καὶ τὸν ἀκαίρως
 πόλιν οἰκουροῦντα πολιτῶν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

πρῶτον μὲν Ἄργος καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους
 380
 δίκη προσειπεῖν, τοὺς ἐμοὶ μεταίτιους
 νόστου δικαίων θ' ὦν ἐπραξάμην πόλιν
 Πριάμου· δίκας γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοὶ
 κλύοντες ἀνδροκμητὰς Ἰλίου φθορὰς

For Ilium's overthrowing cast their votes
With one consent; while to the opposite urn
Hope of the hand came nigh, yet filled it not.
Her smoke still witnesseth the city's fall.
The coils of doom yet live, and dying with them
The ashes pant forth opulent breaths of richness.
For this a memorable return we now
Must pay the Gods, since we have woven high
Our wrathful toils, and for one woman stolen
A town has been laid low by the Argive monster,
The horse's brood, the grim shield-bearing folk,
Rousing to spring what time the Pleiads set.
Yea leaping o'er the wall like a fleshed lion
It lapped its fill of proud and princely blood.
This ample prelude to the Gods is due.
Now for thy hinting—I heard and bear in mind.
I say the same, and share in thy suspicions.
I speak with knowledge, having thoroughly learned
How friendship is a mirror, a shadow's ghost,
The hypocrite's pretence to wish me well.
But where we find need of medicinal cure,
By wise use of the knife or cautery
We will endeavour to expel disease.
Now to my palace and domestic hearth
I pass within, there first to greet the Gods,
Who sent me forth and thus have brought me home.
May victory still bide with me to the end.

Cl. Townsmen of Argos, reverend counsellors,
I blush not to confess to you my love
And woman's fondness. As years pass, timidity
Wanes in us all. No witness but my own
I need to tell what grievous life was mine

εἰς αἵματηρὸν τεῦχος οὐ διχορρόπως
 ψήφους ἔθεντο· τῷ δ' ἐναντίῳ κύτει 385
 ἐλπίς προσήει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένῳ.
 καπνῷ δ' ἀλοῦσα νῦν ἔτ' εὔσημος πόλις.
 ἄτης θύελλαι ζῶσι· συνθυήσκουσα δὲ
 σποδὸς προπέμπει πίνοντας πλούτου πινούσας.
 τούτων θεοῖσι χρὴ πολύμνηστον χάριν 390
 τίνειν, ἐπεὶ περ καὶ πάγας ὑπερκότους
 ἐφραξάμεσθα καὶ γυναικὸς οὔνεκα
 πόλιν διημάθυνεν Ἀργεῖον δάκος,
 ἵππου νεοσσός, ἀσπιδωστρόφος λεώς,
 πῆδημ' ὀρούσας ἀμφὶ Πλειάδων δύσιν· 395
 ὑπερθορῶν δὲ πύργον ὠμῆστις λέων
 ἄδην ἔλειξεν αἵματος τυραννικοῦ.
 θεοῖς μὲν ἐξέτεινα φροῖμιον τόδε·
 τὰ δ' ἐς τὸ σὸν φρόνημα, μέμνημαι κλύων,
 καὶ φημὶ ταῦτά καὶ συνήγορόν μ' ἔχεις. 400
 εἰδὼς λέγοιμ' ἄν, εὖ γὰρ ἐξεπίσταμαι,
 ὁμιλίας ἀάτοπτρον, εἰδῶλον σκιᾶς,
 δοκοῦντας εἶναι κάρτα πρευμανεῖς ἐμοί.
 ὅτῳ δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,
 ἥτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως 405
 πειρασόμεσθα πῆματος τρέψαι νόσον.
 νῦν δ' ἐς μέλαθρα καὶ δόμους ἐφεστίους
 ἐλθὼν θεοῖσι πρῶτα δεξιώσομαι,
 οἵ περ πρόσω πέμψαντες ἡγαγον πάλιν.
 νίκη δ' ἐπεὶ περ ἔσπετ', ἐμπέδως μένοι. 410

Κλ. ἄνδρες πολῖται, πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε,
 οὐκ αἰσχυνοῦμαι τοὺς φιλάνορας τρόπους
 λέξαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐν χρόνῳ δ' ἀποφθίνει
 τὸ τάρβος ἀνθρώποισιν. οὐκ ἄλλων πάρα
 μαθοῦσ', ἐμαυτῆς δύσφορον λέξω βίον 415

All that long while my lord lay beneath Ilium.
First for a woman 'tis a woeful trial
To sit at home forlorn, her husband far,
Her ears filled ever with persistent tales,
One close upon the other's heels with news
Each of some worse disaster than the last.
And as for wounds, if my lord had received
As many as rumour deluged us withal,
No net had been more full of holes than he.
And had he died oft as report declared,
A second Geryon with triple body
A threefold vest of earth he might have boasted,
Dying once for each several shape anew.
By reason of such persistent rumours, oft
Have others loosened from my neck perforce
The hanging noose, foiling my fond desire.
Hence too the boy Orestes, the true bond
Of confidence between us, stands not here
Beside me, as he should. Nor think it strange.
He is in safe keeping with our good ally,
Strophius the Phocian, who has warned me oft
Of double mischief, thine own peril first
Before Troy, and the fear lest turbulent anarchy
Might risk some plot against us, as men's wont
Is to spurn him the more who has been cast down.
Such were my reasons, honest and without guile.
But as for me, the fountains of my tears
Have run themselves quite dry. No drop is left.
And my late-watching eyes have suffered hurt
Weeping thy nightly pomp of torch-bearers
Neglected ever. And the wailing gnat
With faintest pulse of wing would startle me

τοσόνδ' ὅσονπερ οὗτος ἦν ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ.
 τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσεινος δίχα
 ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν,
 πολλὰς κλύουσιν κληδύνας παλιγκότους·
 καὶ τὸν μὲν ἥκειν, τὸν δ' ἐπεσφέρειν κακοῦ 420
 κάκιον ἄλλο πῆμα, λάσκοντας δόμοις.
 καὶ τραυμάτων μὲν εἰ τόσων ἐτύχχανεν
 ἀνὴρ ὅδ', ὥς πρὸς οἶκον ὠχετεύετο
 φάτις, τέτρηται δικτύου πλέον λέγειν.
 εἰ δ' ἦν τεθνηκώς, ὥς ἐπλήθουν λόγοι, 425
 τρισώματός τ' αὖ Γηρυὼν ὁ δεύτερος
 χθονὸς τρίμοιρον χλαῖναν ἐξηύχει λαβεῖν,
 ἅπαξ ἐκάστω κατθανὼν μορφώματι.
 τοιῶνδ' ἕκατι κληδόνων παλιγκότων
 πολλὰς ἄνωθεν ἀρτάνας ἐμῆς δέρης 430
 ἔλυσαν ἄλλοι πρὸς βίαν λελιμμένης.
 ἐκ τῶνδ' εἰ παῖς ἐνθάδ' οὐ παραστατεῖ,
 ἐμῶν τε καὶ σῶν κύριος πιστωμάτων,
 ὥς χρῆν, Ὀρέστης· μηδὲ θαυμάσης τόδε.
 τρέφει γὰρ αὐτὸν εὐμενὴς δορυξενός 435
 Στρόφιος ὁ Φωκεύς, ἀμφίλεκτα πῆματα
 ἐμοὶ προφωνῶν, τὸν θ' ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ σέθεν
 κίνδυνον, εἴ τε δημόθρους ἀναρχία
 βουλὴν καταρράψειεν, ὥστε σύγγονοι
 βροτοῖσι τὸν πεσόντα λακτίσαι πλέον. 440
 τοιάδε μέντοι σκῆψις οὐ δόλον φέρει.
 ἔμοιγε μὲν δὴ κλαυμάτων ἐπίσσυτοι
 πηγαὶ κατεσβήκασιν, οὐδ' ἐνὶ σταγῶν.
 ἐν ὑψικοίτοις δ' ὄμμασιν βλάβας ἔχω
 τὰς ἀμφί σοι κλαίουσα λαμπτηρουχίας 445
 ἀτημελήτους αἰέν. ἐν δ' ὀνείρασιν
 λεπταῖς ὑπαὶ κώνωπος ἐξηγειρόμην

From dreams wherein I saw thee pass through more
Than could befall within the time I slept.
Now after all these trials, with heart unpined,
I hail my husband watch-dog of the fold,
The ship's securing stay, the lofty roof's
Firm-grounded pillar, the father's sole-born child,
Or as land espied by seamen beyond hope,
Daylight as it looks fairest after storm,
A fresh spring to the thirsty wayfarer.
Such are the terms I choose to praise him fitly.
Let envy keep afar, since woes in plenty
We endured before. Now, most dear lord, descend
From yonder car; but set not upon earth
That foot, O king, wherewith thou hast trampled Troy.
Women, delay not. Know ye not your task?
Strew ye the path he treads with tapestries.
Straight let his way be carpeted with purple,
That Justice lead him to a home scarce hoped for.
For the rest a never-slumbering vigilance
Shall order justly as fate, I trust, intends.

Ag. Offspring of Leda, guardian of my home,
Lengthily, to the measure of my absence,
Hast thou stretched out thy speech: but seemly praise,
That tribute should proceed from other lips.
Moreover shame not *me* with womanish fopperies,
Nor grovel before *me* with loud-mouthed clamour,
As though I were some oriental king;
Nor with strown garments make my steps the gaze
Of envy. To the Gods such pomp belongs.
To tread, a mortal, over brodered fineries,
That to my conscience were a thing of fear.
As man, not God, I bid you reverence me.

ῥιπαῖσι θώσσουντος, ἀμφί σοι πάθῃ
 ὀρώσα πλείω τοῦ ξυνεύδοντος χρόνου.
 νῦν ταῦτα πάντα τλᾶσ' ἰπενθήτῳ φρενὶ 450
 λέγοιμ' ἂν ἄνδρα τόνδε τῶν σταθμῶν κύνα,
 σωτήρα ναὸς πρότονον, ὑψηλῆς στέγης
 στῦλον ποδήρη, μονογενὲς τέκνον πατρί,
 καὶ γῆν φανείσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα,
 κάλλιστον ἦμαρ εἰσιδεῖν ἐκ χείματος, 455
 ὁδοιπόρῳ διψῶντι πηγαῖον ῥέος.
 τοιοῖσδέ τοί νιν ἀξιῶ προσφθέγμασιν.
 φθόνος δ' ἀπέστω· πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ πρὶν κακὰ
 ἦνειχόμεσθα. νῦν δέ μοι, φίλον κᾶρα,
 ἔκβαιν' ὑπὴνης τῆσδε, μὴ χαμαὶ τιθεῖς 460
 τὸν σὸν πόδ', ὦναξ, Ἰλίου πορθήτορα.
 δμωαί, τί μέλλεθ', αἷς ἐπέσταλται τέλος
 πέδον κελεύθου στρωννύναι πετάσμασιν;
 εὐθὺς γενέσθω πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος
 ἐς δῶμ' ἄελπτον ὥς ἂν ἡγήται δίκη. 465
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα φροντὶς οὐχ ὕπνῳ νικωμένη
 θήσει δικαίως σὺν θεοῖς εἰμαρμένα.

Αἴ. Λήδας γένεθλοι, δωμάτων ἐμῶν φύλαξ,
 ἀπουσία μὲν εἶπας εἰκότως ἐμῇ·
 μακρὰν γὰρ ἐξέτεινας· ἀλλ' ἐναισίμως 470
 αἰνεῖν, παρ' ἄλλων χρὴ τόδ' ἔρχεσθαι γέρας·
 καὶ τᾶλλα μὴ γυναικὸς ἐν τρόποις ἐμὲ
 ἱβρυνε, μηδὲ βαρβάρου φωτὸς δίκην
 χαμαιπετὲς βόαμα προσχάνης ἐμοί,
 μηδ' εἵμασι στρώσας' ἐπίφθονον πόρον 475
 τίθει· θεοὺς τοι τοῖσδε τιμαλφεῖν χρεών·
 ἐν ποικίλοις δὲ θνητὸν ὄντα κάλλεσιν
 βαίνειν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐδαμῶς ἄνευ φόβου.
 λέγω κατ' ἄνδρα, μὴ θεόν, σέβειν ἐμέ.

No need of foot-cloths and embroideries:

Fame's voice rings loud enough. Heaven's greatest
Is a sane mind. Happy let him be called [gift
Whose life has ended in felicity.

Acting in all things thus, naught need I fear.

Cl. Come now, if judgment sanction, tell me this—

Ag. My judgment, be assured, I shall not change.

Cl. Would you in peril's hour have vowed this ritual?

Ag. Yes, had advised authority prescribed it.

Cl. What think you Priam had done, were his this
triumph?

Ag. On broidered robes he doubtless would have trod.

Cl. Then let not human censure make thee ashamed.

Ag. Yet mighty is the people's murmuring voice.

Cl. Who stirs no jealousy, neither is he envied.

Ag. 'Tis not a woman's part to thirst for strife.

Cl. The fortunate may yield victory with grace.

Ag. Dost thou too deem this victory worth a contest?

Cl. Yield; victor still, since vanquished willingly.

Ag. Well, if it please thee, quick, let one unloose
My shoes, these insolent slaves beneath my feet;

Lest, as with these I walk the sacred purples,
Some evil glance should strike me from afar.

'Tis shame enough to waste our wealth by trampling
And spoiling silver-purchased tapestries.

Of that enough. This stranger damsel now
Receive with kindness. A gentle master wins
Approving glances from God's distant eye.

And she, the chosen flower of our rich spoil,
The army's gift, hath followed in my train.

Since then I am reduced herein to obey thee,
To the palace will I go trampling on purples.

χωρὶς ποδοψήστρων τε καὶ τῶν ποικίλων 480
 κληδὼν ἀντεῖ· καὶ τὸ μὴ κακῶς φρονεῖν
 θεοῦ μέγιστον δῶρον. ὀλβίσαι δὲ χρὴ
 βίον τελευτήσαντ' ἐν εὖεστοι φίλῃ.
 εἶπον τὰδ' ὥς πρίσσοιμ' ἂν εὐθαρσῆς ἐγώ.

Κλ. καὶ μὴν τόδ' εἶπε μὴ παρὰ γνώμην ἐμοί. 485

Αγ. γνώμην μὲν ἴσθι μὴ διαφθεροῦντ' ἐμέ.

Κλ. ἡὔξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ᾧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε;

Αγ. εἶπερ τις, εἰδὼς γ' εὖ, τόδ' ἐξεῖπεν τέλος.

Κλ. τί δ' ἂν δοκεῖ σοι Πρίαμος, εἰ τὰδ' ἤνυσεν;

Αγ. ἐν ποικίλοις ἂν κάρτα μοι βῆναι δοκεῖ. 490

Κλ. μὴ νυν τὸν ἀνθρώπειον αἰδεσθῆς ψόγον.

Αγ. φήμη γε μέντοι δημόθρους μέγα σθένει.

Κλ. ὁ δ' ἀφθόνητός γ' οὐκ ἐπίζηλος πέλει.

Αγ. οὔτοι γυναικός ἐστιν ἰμείρειν μάχης.

Κλ. τοῖς δ' ὀλβίοις γε καὶ τὸ νικᾶσθαι πρέπει. 495

Αγ. ἦ καὶ σὺ νίκην τήνδε δῆριος τίεις;

Κλ. πιθοῦ· κρατεῖς μέντοι παρεῖς γ' ἐκὼν ἐμοί.

Αγ. ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ σοι ταῦθ', ὑπαί τις ἀρβύλας
 λύοι τάχος, πρόδουλον ἔμβασιν ποδός,
 σὺν ταῖσδέ μ' ἐμβαίνοινθ' ἀλουργέσιν θεῶν 500
 μὴ τις πρόσωθεν ὄμματος βάλοι φθόνος.
 πολλή γὰρ αἰδὼς δωματοφθορεῖν ποσὶν
 φθείροντα πλοῦτον ἀργυρωνήτους θ' ὑφάς.
 τούτων μὲν οὔτω· τὴν ξένην δὲ πρηνεινῶς
 τήνδ' ἐσκόμιζε· τὸν κρατοῦντα μαλθακῶς 505
 θεὸς πρόσωθεν εὐμεινῶς προσδέρκεται.

αὕτη δὲ πολλῶν χρημάτων ἐξαίρετον
 ἄνθος, στρατοῦ δώρημ', ἐμοὶ ξυνέσπετο.
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀκούειν σοῦ κατέστραμμαι τάδε,
 εἴμ' ἐς δόμων μέλαθρα πορφύρας πατῶν. 510

Cl. There is the sea, (and who shall drain it dry?)
 Breeding abundant purple, costly as silver,
 Forever oozing fresh to dip robes in.
 And of such, Heaven be thanked, good store, my king,
 Is ours. This house knows naught of penury.
 Full many a robe for trampling had I vowed,
 Had the oracles enjoined it, when I sought
 Some means to ransom home so dear a life.
 Thou art the living root whence springs the foliage
 That screens our house against the dog-star's glare.
 So thou returning to thy home and hearth
 Betokenest warmth in winter's midst returned.
 And when Zeus from the unripe grape's virginity
 Matures wine, then like coolness in the house
 Is the advent of the crowned and perfect lord.

[*As AGAMEMNON goes in.*]

Zeus, Zeus, who crownest all, crown now my prayers!
 Thereafter as thou wilt mayst thou dispose.

[*CLYTAEMNESTRA follows AGAMEMNON, but
 immediately returns.*]

Cl. Thou too, get thee within, Cassandra, thou.
Ch. To thee she speaks, plain words, and pauses for thee.
 Snared as thou art within the toils of fate,
 If so thou canst, yield; or perchance thou canst not.
Cl. Nay, unless her speech be like a twittering swallow's,
 Some barbarous, unintelligible tongue,
 She will understand my reasoning and obey.
Ch. Go with her. As things stand, she counsels best.
Cl. I have no leisure to stand trifling here
 Outside, when round the central hearth already

- Κλ. ἔστιν θάλασσα, τίς δέ νιν κατασβέσει ;
τρέφουσα πολλῆς πορφύρας ἰσάργυρον
κηκίδα παγκαίνιστον, εἰμάτων βαφίς.
οἶκος δ' ὑπάρχει τῶνδε σὺν θεοῖς, ἄναξ,
ἔχειν· πένεσθαι δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται δόμος. 515
πολλῶν πατησμὸν δ' εἰμάτων ἂν ηὔξάμην,
δόμοισι προυνεχθέντος ἐν χρηστηρίοις,
ψυχῆς κόμιστρα τῆσδε μηχανωμένη.
ρίζης γὰρ οὔσης φυλλὰς ἴκετ' ἐς δόμους,
σκιὰν ὑπερτείνασα σειρίου κυνός. 520
καὶ σοῦ μολόντος δωματῆτιν ἐστίαν,
θάλλπος μὲν ἐν χειμῶνι σημαίνεις μολῶν·
ἔταν δὲ τεύχη Ζεὺς ἀπ' ὄμφακος πικρᾶς
οἶνον, τότ' ἤδη ψῦχος ἐν δόμοις πέλει,
ἀνδρὸς τελείου δῶμ' ἐπιστρωφωμένου. 525

[As AGAMEMNON goes in.]

Ζεῦ Ζεῦ τέλειε, τὰς ἐμὰς εὐχὰς τέλει·
μέλοι δέ τοι σοὶ τῶνπερ ἂν μέλλης τελεῖν.

[CLYTEMNESTRA follows AGAMEMNON, but
immediately returns.]

- Κλ. εἴσω κομίζου καὶ σύ, Κασάνδραν λέγω.
Χο. σοί τοι λέγουσα παύεται σαφῆ λόγον.
ἐντὸς δ' ἀλοῦσα μορσίμων ἀγρευμάτων 530
πέιθοι' ἂν, εἰ πείθοι'· ἀπειθοίης δ' ἴσως.
Κλ. ἀλλ' εὔπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκην
ἀγνώτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη,
ἔσω φρενῶν λέγουσα πείθω νιν λόγῳ.
Χο. ἔπου. τὰ λῆστα τῶν παρεστώτων λέγει. 535
Κλ. οὔτοι θυραία τῇδ' ἐμοὶ σχολὴ πάρα
τρίβειν· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐστίας μεσομφάλου

The victims wait the sacrifice of fire.

No more will I waste words to be so served.

[*Exit* CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

Ch. And I, for I feel pity, will not chide.

KASSANDRA

Otototoi O Earth! Earth!

O Apollo! O Apollo!

Ch. Why upon Loxias callest thou thus woefully?

He is not one who needeth dirgelike litanies.

Ka. Otototoi O Earth! Earth!

O Apollo! O Apollo!

Ch. Once more with ill-omened cries she calls that God

Whose ears by lamentations are profaned.

Ka. Apollo! Apollo!

God of Ways, Apollo indeed to me!

For me thou hast this second time in truth destroyed.

Ch. Of her own woes it seems that she will prophesy.

Heaven still inspires her mind, a slave's though it be.

Ka. Apollo! Apollo!

God of Ways, Apollo indeed to me!

Ah whither hast thou led me? yea, to what abode?

Ch. The Atreidae's palace. If thou knowest not that,

Take my assurance: thou shalt not find it false.

Ka. Nay, 'tis abhorred of Heaven: much is it privy to,

Unnatural murders and butcheries,

A human shambles, sprinkled are the floors with blood.

Ch. Keen as a hound upon the scent she seems.

This trail shall lead her soon where murder lies.

Ka. There are the witnesses—there am I certified!

ἔστηκεν ἤδη μῆλα πρὸς σφαγὰς πυρός.
οὐ μὴν πλέω ῥίψας ἀτιμασθήσομαι.

[Exit CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

Χο. ἐγὼ δ', ἐποικτείρω γάρ, οὐ θυμώσομαι. 510

ΚΛΥΤΑΕΜΝΕΣΤΡΑ

ὄτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ. [στρ. α.
ὥπολλον ὥπολλον.

Χο. τί ταῦτ' ἀνωτότυξας ἀμφὶ Λοξίου;
οὐ γὰρ τοιοῦτος ὥστε θρηνητοῦ τυχεῖν.

Κα. ὄτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ. [ἀντ. α. 545
ὥπολλον ὥπολλον.

Χο. ἢ δ' αὖτε δυσφημοῦσα τὸν θεὸν καλεῖ
οὐδὲν προσήκοντ' ἐν γόοις παραστατεῖν.

Κα. "Απολλον" Απολλον [στρ. β.
ἀγνιᾶτ' ἀπόλλων ἐμός. 550
ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόλις τὸ δεύτερον.

Χο. χρήσειν ἔοικεν ἀμφὶ τῶν αὐτῆς κακῶν.
μένει τὸ θεῖον δουλίᾳ περ ἐν φρενί.

Κα. "Απολλον" Απολλον [ἀντ. β.
ἀγνιᾶτ' ἀπόλλων ἐμός. 555
ἂ ποῖ ποτ' ἤγαγές με; πρὸς ποίαν στέγην;

Χο. πρὸς τὴν Ἀτρειδῶν· εἰ σὺ μὴ τόδ' ἐννοεῖς,
ἐγὼ λέγω σοι· καὶ τὰδ' οὐκ ἐρεῖς ψύθῃ.

Κα. μισόθεον μὲν οἶν, πολλὰ συνίστορα [στρ. γ.
αὐτοφόνα κακὰ καὶ ἄρταμα, 560
ἀνδρσφαγεῖον καὶ πέδον ῥαντήριον.

Χο. ἔοικεν εὖρις ἢ ξένη κυνὸς δίκη
εἶναι, ματεύει δ' ὦν ἀνευρήσει φόνον.

Κα. μαρτυρίοισι γὰρ τοῖσδ' ἐπιπείθομαι· [ἀντ. γ.

Babes yonder bewailing their sacrifice!

Wailing their flesh by a father roasted and devoured!

Ch. We were acquainted with thy mantic fame:
But of these things we seek no prophet here.

Ka. Alas! Ye Gods! What is she purposing?
What is this new and monstrous deed,
This deed of woe she purposes within this house,
Beyond love's enduring,
Beyond cure? and aloof stands
Succouring strength afar.

Ch. I know not what these prophesyings mean.
The first I guessed: with them the whole city is loud.

Ka. Oh cruel, cruel! Verily wilt thou so?
Him who hath shared thy nuptial bed,
When thou hast laved and cleansed him—how shall
Apace, see, the deed nears! [I tell the end?
With a swift reach she shoots forth
Murderous hand upon hand.

Ch. Not yet do I understand. Dark riddles first,
Dim-visioned oracles perplex me now.

Ka. Ey! Ey! Papai, papai!
What is this now I see?
Some net of death 'tis surely? [the crime
But she's the snare, who shared the bed, who shares
Of blood. Let Strife, ravening against the race,
Utter a jubilant cry
O'er the abhorred sacrifice.

Ch. What fiend is this thou bidst lift o'er the house
A cry of triumph? Thy words bring me no cheer.
Back to my heart the drops yellow and pale have run,
As when o'er the face of one fallen in fight

κλαιόμενα τάδε βρέφη σφαγὰς, 505
ὀπτάς τε σάρκας πρὸς πατρὸς βεβρωμένας.

Χο. ἦμεν κλέος σοῦ μαντικὸν πεπυσμένοι·
τούτων προφήτας δ' οὔτινας ματεύομεν.

Κα. ἰὼ πόποι, τί ποτε μῆδεται; [στρ. δ.
τί τόδε νέον ἄχος μέγα 570
μέγ' ἐν δόμοισι τοῖσδε μῆδεται κακὸν
ἄφερτον φίλοισιν, δυσίατον; ἀλκὰ δ'
ἐκὰς ἀποστατεῖ.

Χο. τούτων ἄιδρίς εἰμι τῶν μαντευμάτων.
ἐκεῖνα δ' ἔγνω· πᾶσα γὰρ πόλις βοᾷ. 575

Κα. ἰὼ τάλαινα, τόδε γὰρ τελεῖς, [ἀντ. δ.
τὸν ὀμοδέμνιον πόσιν
λουτροῖσι φαιδρύνασα—πῶς φράσω τέλος;
τάχος γὰρ τόδ' ἔσται· προτείνει δὲ χεῖρ' ἐκ
χερὸς ὀρεγμέναν. 580

Χο. οὐπω ξυνῆκα· νῦν γὰρ ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων
ἐπαργέμοισι θεσφάτοις ἀμηχανῶ.

Κα. ἐ εἰ, παπαῖ παπαῖ, τί τόδε φαίνεται; [στρ. ε.
ἦ δίκτυόν τί γ' Ἄιδου;
ἀλλ' ἄρκυς ἢ ξύνευνος, ἢ ξυναιτία 585
φόνου. στάσις δ' ἀκόρετος γένει
κατολολυξάτω θύματος λευσίμου.

Χο. ποῖαν Ἐρινὺν τήνδε δώμασιν κέλει
ἐπορθιάζειν; οὐ με φαιδρύνει λόγος.
ἐπὶ δὲ καρδίαν ἔδραμε κροκοβαφῆς 590
σταγών, ἅτε καὶ δορὶ πτωσίμοις

Pallor of death is spread
Timed with life's sinking rays;
And the end neareth swift.

Ka. Ah! Ah! Beware! Beware!

From his accursèd mate
Keep far the bull. In vestments
She entangles him, and with her black and crafty horn
Gores him. He falls into the cauldron's steam,
Treacherous murdering bath,
Thus thy dark story is told.

Ch. I cannot boast to be a skilful judge

Of oracles; but 'tis woe I spell from these.
When from a prophet's mouth ever to mortal ears
Have good tidings sped? 'Tis naught else but woe
Volubly chanted forth,
Teaching fear, fear alone,
In skilled monotone.

Ka. Alas, alas! What hapless sorrowful doom is mine!

For of my own sad fate, mingled with his, I tell.

Ah whither hast thou brought me now, the hapless
one? [else?

For naught save only to share death with thee? What

Ch. Frenzied and heaven-possessed, ever thine own

In wild, lawless strains [despair

Thou art uttering, even as doth heart-sore,

Never with wailing satiate,

Some brown nightingale.

Ityn, Ityn she sighs, mourning in anguish all

Her woe-plenished life.

Ka. Alas, alas! The doom of the musical nightingale!

For with a winged and soft-featherèd form the Gods

ξυνανύτει βίου δύντος ἀνγαῖς. ταχεῖ-
α δ' ἅτα πέλει.

Κα. ἃ ἄ, ἰδοὺ ἰδού· ἄπεχε τῆς βοῦς [ἀντ. ε.
τὸν ταῦρον· ἐν πέπλοισι 595
μελαγκέρῳ λαβοῦσα μηχανήματι
τύπτει· πίτνει δ' ἐν ἐνύδρῳ κύτει.
δολοφόνου λέβητος τύχαν σοι λέγω.

Χο. οὐ κομπάσαιμ' ἂν θεσφάτων γνώμων ἄκρος
εἶναι, κακῷ δέ τῳ προσεικάζω τάδε. 600
ἀπὸ δὲ θεσφάτων τίς ἀγαθὰ φάτις
βροτοῖς στέλλεται; κακῶν γὰρ διαὶ
πολυεπεῖς τέχναι θεσπιῶδὸν φόβον
φέρουσιν μαθεῖν.

Κα. ἰὼ ἰὼ ταλαίνας κακόποτμοι τύχαι· [στρ. ζ.
τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν θροῶ πάθος ἐπεγχύδαν. 606
ποῖ δὴ με δεῦρο τὴν τάλαιναν ἤγαγες;
οὐδέν ποτ' εἰ μὴ ξυνθανομένην. τί γάρ;

Χο. φρενομανῆς τις εἶ θεοφόρητος, ἄμ-
φι δ' αὐτᾶς θροεῖς 610
νόμον ἄνομον, οἷά τις ξουθὰ
ἀκόρετος βοῶς, φεῦ, ταλαίναις φρεσὶν
Ἴτυν Ἴτυν στένουσ' ἄμφιθαλῇ κακοῖς
ἀηδὼν βίον.

Κα. ἰὼ ἰὼ λιγείας μόρον ἀηδόνης· [ἀντ. ζ.
περίβαλόν γε οἱ πτεροφόρον δέμας 616

Arrayed her, a gentle suffering a tearless change.
But me awaits the cleaving of a two-edged blade.

Ch. Agony fierce and vain, passionate mantic throes,
Oh whènce hàst thou these,
Such a terrible chant in wild harsh cries
Fashioning forth, yet clear-voiced
In loud rhythmic strains?
What may it be that thus guides and inspires thy word
On its ill-boding path?

Ka. Lo now my oracle no more through a veil
Shall look forth dimly, like a bride new-wed;
But clear and strong towards the rising sun
Shall it come blowing, and before it roll
Wave-like against the light a woe than this
More huge. No longer in riddles will I monish you.
This house is ever haunted by a quire
Of hideous concord, for the song is foul.
Lo, drunken with human blood till they wax bold
And insolent, they abide within, a rout,
Hard to expel, of revelling kindred fiends.
They infest the chamber-doors chanting their chant
Of that first sin: anon they execrate
The abhorred defiler of a brother's bed.
Say, have I missed, or was my shaft aimed home?
Or am I a false seer, a prating vagabond?
Bear witness with an oath that well I know
The ancient tale of the sins of this house.

Ch. How should an oath, though ne'er so truly plighted,
Bring remedy? But I much admire that thou,
Though bred beyond the sea, shouldst speak as cer-
tainly [there.
Of a strange land as though thou hadst sojourned

θεοὶ γλυκύν τ' ἀγῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ·
ἐμοὶ δὲ μίμνει σχισμὸς ἀμφήκει δορί.

Χο. πόθεν ἐπισσύτους θεοφόρους τ' ἔχεις
ματαίους δύας, 620
τὰ δ' ἐπίφοβα δυσφάτῳ κλαγγᾷ
μελοτυπεῖς ὁμοῦ τ' ὀρθίοις ἐν νόμοις;
πόθεν ὄρους ἔχεις θεσπεσίας ὁδοῦ
κακορρήμονας;

Κα. καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων 625
ἔσται δεδορκῶς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκη·
λαμπρὸς δ' ἔοικεν ἡλίου πρὸς ἀντολὰς
πνέων ἐσάξειν, ὥστε κύματος δίκην
κλύζειν πρὸς αὐγὰς τοῦδε πῆματος πολὺν
μεῖζον· φρενώσω δ' οὐκέτ' ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων. 630
τὴν γὰρ στέγην τήνδ' οὐποτ' ἐκλείπει χορὸς
σύμφθογγος οὐκ εὐφωῖνος· οὐ γὰρ εὖ λέγει.
καὶ μὴν πεπωκῶς γ', ὥς θρασύνεσθαι πλεον,
βρότειον αἶμα κῶμος ἐν δόμοις μένει,
δύσπεμπτος ἔξω, συγγόνων Ἐρινύων. 635
ὑμνοῦσι δ' ὕμνον δώμασιν προσήμεναι
πρώταρχον ἄτην· ἐν μέρει δ' ἀπέπτυσαν
εὐνὰς ἀδελφοῦ τῷ πατοῦντι δυσμενεῖς.
ἥμαρτον, ἢ θηρῶ τι τοξότης τις ὥς;
ἢ ψευδόμαντις εἰμι θυροκόπος φλέδων; 640
ἐκμαρτύρησον προνύμφας τό μ' εἰδέναι
λόγῳ παλαιᾷς τῶνδ' ἁμαρτίας δόμων.

Χο. καὶ πῶς ἂν ὄρκος, πῆγμα γεῖναίως παγέν,
παιώνιος γένοιτο; θαυμάζω δέ σε
πόντου πέραν τραφεῖσαν ἀλλόθρου πόντιν 645
κυρεῖν λέγουσαι, ὥσπερ εἰ παρεστάτεις.

Ka. The seer Apollo endowed me with this skill.

Ch. Smitten with love perchance, God though he be?

Ka. Hitherto shame forbade me to confess it.

Ch. Yes, we are all more delicate in prosperity.

Ka. Vehement and mighty was the love he breathed.

Ch. And in due course came you to child-bearing?

Ka. I gave consent, then kept not faith with Loxias.

Ch. Already wast thou possessed by power of prophecy?

Ka. Already Troy's whole agony I foretold.

Ch. How then! Couldst thou escape the wrath of Loxias?

Ka. None would believe my words: so was I punished.

Ch. Yet to us thy words seem worthy of belief.

Ka. Ioû! Ioû! Oh agony!

Again dire pangs of clear vision whirl

And rack my soul with awful preludings.

Behold them there, sitting before the house,

Young children, like to phantom shapes in dream!

Boys slain by their own kindred they appear.

Their hands are filled with flesh, yea 'tis their own.

The heart, the inward parts, see, they are holding,

(Oh piteous burden,) whereof their father tasted.

For this, I tell you, vengeance is devised

By a recreant lion who lurking in the bed

Keeps watch, ah me! for the returning lord;

My lord; for the slave's yoke I must endure.

The fleet's high captain, Ilium's ravager,

He knows not what the abhorred she-hound's tongue

After long-drawn fawning welcome—what accurst

Treacherous stroke she aims with deadly stealth.

O wickedness horrible! Of her lord the wife

- Κα. μάντις μ' Ἀπόλλων τῷδ' ἐπέστησεν τέλει.
 Χο. μῶν καὶ θεῖς περ ἰμέρῳ πεπληγμένος;
 Κα. προτοῦ μὲν αἰδῶς ἦν ἐμοὶ λέγειν τάδε.
 Χο. ἄβρύνεται γὰρ πᾶς τις εὖ πράσσω· πλέον. 650
 Κα. ἄλλ' ἦν παλαιστῆς κάρτ' ἐμοὶ πνέων χάριν.
 Χο. ἦ καὶ τέκνων εἰς ἔργον ἡλθέτην νόμῳ;
 Κα. ξυναινέσασα Λοξίαν ἐψευσάμην.
 Χο. ἤδη τέχναισιν ἐνθέοις ἡρημένη;
 Κα. ἤδη πολίταις πάντ' ἐθέσπιζον πάθη. 655
 Χο. πῶς δῆτ'; ἄνατος ἦσθα Λοξίου κότῳ;
 Κα. ἔπειθον οὐδέν' οὐδέν, ὥς τίδ' ἤμπλακον.
 Χο. ἡμῖν γε μὲν δὴ πιστὰ θεσπίζειν δοκεῖς.
 Κα. ἰὸν ἰού, ὦ ὦ κακά.
 ὑπ' αὖ με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος 660
 στροβεῖ ταρασσῶν φροιμίῳις δυσφροιμίῳις.
 ὁρᾶτε τοῦσδε τοὺς δόμοις ἐφημένους
 νέους, ὀνειρῶν προσφερεῖς μορφώμασι;
 παῖδες θανόντες ὥσπερ εἰ πρὸς τῶν φίλων,
 χεῖρας κρεῶν πλήθοντες οἰκείας βορᾶς, 665
 σὺν ἐντέροις τε σπλάγχχ' ἐποίκτιστον γέμος,
 πρέπουσ' ἔχοντες, ὦν πατὴρ ἐγεύσατο.
 ἐκ τῶνδε ποινὰς φημι βουλεύειν τινὰ
 λέοντ' ἀναλκιν ἐν λέχει στρωφόμενον
 οἰκουρόν, οἵμοι, τῷ μολόντι δεσπότη 670
 ἐμῷ· φέρειν γὰρ χρὴ τὸ δούλιον ζυγόν·
 νεῶν δ' ἔπαρχος Ἰλίου τ' ἀναστάτης
 οὐκ οἶδεν οἷα γλῶσσα μισητῆς κυνὸς
 λέξασα κακτεῖναισα φαιδρόνους, δίκην
 ἄτης λαθραίου, τεύξεται κακῇ τύχῃ. 675
 τοιαῦδε τόλμῃ θῆλυς ἄρσενος φονεὺς

Is murderess. By what loathsome monster's name
Should I describe her fitly? An amphisbaena?
Or some cliff-lairing Scylla, bane of mariners,
A raging demon mother, breathing havoc
Against her dearest? And how she cried in triumph,
The all-shameless fiend, as when a battle breaks,
Feigning to glory in his safe return!
Herein though I gain no credence, 'tis all one.
What must be, shall be; and thou beholding soon
Shalt call me in pity a prophet all too true.

Ch. Thyestes' banquet of his own children's flesh
Shuddering I understood. Yea horror seized me
Hearing the true tale without fabling told.
But in all else I wander far astray.

Ka. Agamemnon's death I say thou shalt behold.

Ch. Peace, wretched woman! Hush thy ill-omened lips.

Ka. This word no Healing God can remedy.

Ch. Not if it must be so: but Heaven avert it!

Ka. While thou prayest, the slayers are making ready.

Ch. What man is the contriver of this woe?

Ka. Wide indeed of my warning must thou have looked.

Ch. For I perceive not how the deed is possible.

Ka. See now, I know the Greek tongue all too well.

Ch. So doth the Pythoness: yet her words are dark.

Ka. Papai! What is this fire! It surges upon me!

Ototoi! Lycean Apollo! Ay me, me!

Yonder two-footed lioness, who shares

The wolf's couch, while the noble lion is far,

Shall slay me, hapless woman. A vengeful charm

She is brewing, and therein will mix *my* recompense.

ἔστιν. τί νιν καλοῦσα δυσφιλὲς δάκος
τύχοιμ' ἄν; ἀμφίσβαιναν, ἣ Σκύλλαν τινὰ
οἰκοῦσαν ἐν πέτραισι, ναυτίλων βλάβην,
θύουσαν Ἄιδου μητέρ' ἄσπονδόν τ' ἄρην 680
φίλοις πνέουσαν; ὥς δ' ἐπωλολύξατο
ἢ παντότολμος, ὥσπερ ἐν μίχης τροπῇ.
δοκεῖ δὲ χαίρειν νοστίμῳ σωτηρίᾳ.
καὶ τῶνδ' ὅμοιον εἴ τι μὴ πείθω· τί γάρ;
τὸ μέλλον ἤξει. καὶ σύ μ' ἐν τάχει παρῶν 685
ἄγαν γ' ἀληθόμαντιν οἰκτείρας ἐρεῖς.

Χο. τὴν μὲν Θυέστου δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν
ξυνῆκα καὶ πέφρικα, καὶ φόβος μ' ἔχει
κλύοντ' ἀληθῶς οὐδὲν ἐξηκασμένα.
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἀκούσας ἐκ δρόμου πεσὼν τρέχω. 690

Κα. Ἀγαμέμνονός σέ φημ' ἐπόψεσθαι μόρον.

Χο. εὐφημον, ὦ τάλαινα, κοίμησον στόμα.

Κα. ἀλλ' οὔτι Παιῶν τῶδ' ἐπιστατεῖ λόγῳ.

Χο. οὐκ, εἴπερ ἔσται γ'· ἀλλὰ μὴ γένοιτό πως.

Κα. σὺ μὲν κατεύχει, τοῖς δ' ἀποκτείνειν μέλει. 695

Χο. τίνος πρὸς ἀνδρὸς τοῦτ' ἄχος πορσύνεται;

Κα. ἦ κάρτα τᾶρ' ἂν παρεκόπης χρησμῶν ἐμῶν.

Χο. τοῦ γὰρ τελοῦντος οὐ ξυνῆκα μηχανήν.

Κα. καὶ μὴν ἄγαν γ' Ἑλλήν' ἐπίσταμαι φάτιν.

Χο. καὶ γὰρ τὰ πυθόκραντα· δυσμαθῇ δ' ὅμως. 700

Κα. παπαῖ, οἶον τὸ πῦρ· ἐπέρχεται δέ μοι.

ὅτοτοῖ, Λύκει' Ἀπολλων, οἱ ἐγὼ ἐγώ.

αὕτη δίπους Λέαινα συγκοιμωμένη

λύκῳ, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσία,

κτενεῖ με τὴν τάλαιναν· ὥς δὲ φάρμακον 705

τεύχουσα κάμου μισθὸν ἐνθήσει κότῳ

Sharpening her man-slaying sword, she vows
Bloodily to repay my bringing hither.
Why then to my own derision bear I these—
This wand, these mantic fillets round my neck?
Thee at least, ere I perish, will I destroy.
Down to the ground I cast you, and thus requite you.
Enrich some other, as ye did me, with doom.
But lo, Apollo himself strips off from me,
My prophet's robe, now the spectacle grows stale
Of his victim in these vestments laughed to scorn
By friends and foes alike, and all in vain—
And like a vagabond mountebank such names
As beggar, wretch or starveling I endured—
And now this seer, being finished with my seership,
Has brought me to be murdered in this place,
Where awaiteth me no altar of my home,
But a block whereon the last blood yet is warm.
Yet not forgotten of Heaven shall we die.
There shall come one to vindicate us, born
To slay his mother and avenge his sire.
A wandering homeless outlaw shall he return
To cope the fabric of ancestral sin.
For with a mighty oath the Gods have sworn,
His father's outstretched corpse shall draw him home.
Why then do I stand thus wailing piteously?
I will meet my fate: I will endure to die.
These gates, as they were Hades' gates, I hail
And that the stroke be mortal is my prayer:
So swiftly and easily shall my blood gush forth,
And without struggle shall I close my eyes.

Ch. Woman, so hapless, yet withal so wise,
Long hast thou held us listening; yet if verily

καὶ πεύχεται θήγουσα φωτὶ φάσγανον
 ἐμῆς ἀγωγῆς ἀντιτίσασθαι φόνον.
 τί δῆτ' ἐμαντῆς καταγέλωτ' ἔχω τάδε,
 καὶ σκῆπτρα καὶ μαντεῖα περὶ δέρῃ στέφη; 710
 σὲ μὲν πρὸ μοίρας τῆς ἐμῆς διαφθερῶ.
 ἔτ' ἐς φθόρον· πεσόντα θ' ὧδ' ἀμείψομαι.
 ἄλλην τιν' ἄτης ἀντ' ἐμοῦ πλουτίζετε.
 ἰδού δ' Ἀπόλλων αὐτὸς ἐκδύων ἐμὲ
 χρηστηρίαν ἐσθήτ', ἐποπτεύσας δέ με 715
 καὶν τοῖσδε κόσμοις καταγελωμένην μέγα
 φίλων ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οὐ διχορρόπως, μάτην—
 καλουμένη δὲ φοιτὰς ὡς ἀγύρτρια
 πτωχὸς τάλαινα λιμοθνὴς ἡνεσχύμην—
 καὶ νῦν ὁ μάντις μάντιν ἐκπράξας ἐμὲ 720
 ἀπήγαγ' ἐς τοιάσδε θανασίμους τύχας.
 βωμοῦ πατρώου δ' ἄντ' ἐπίξηνιον μένει,
 θερμὸν κοπέντος φοιρίῳ προσφύγματι.
 οὐ μὲν ἄτιμοί γ' ἐκ θεῶν τέθνηξομεν.
 ἥξει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἄλλος αὖ τιμάορος, 725
 μητροκτόνον φίλυμα, ποινάτωρ πατρός·
 φυγὰς δ' ἀλήτης τῆσδε γῆς ἀπόξενος
 κάτεισιν, ἄτας τάσδε θριγκώσων φίλοις·
 ὁμώμοται γὰρ ὄρκος ἐκ θεῶν μέγας,
 ἄξειν νιν ὑπτίασμα κειμένου πατρός. 730
 τί δῆτ' ἐγὼ κάτοικτος ὧδ' ἀναστένω;
 ἰοῦσα πρᾶξω· τλήσομαι τὸ κατθανεῖν.
 "Αἰδου πύλας δὲ τάσδ' ἐγὼ προσεννέπω·
 ἐπεύχομαι δὲ καιρίας πληγῆς τυχεῖν,
 ὡς ἀσφάδαστος, αἰμάτων εὐθνησίμων 735
 ἀπορρυνέντων, ὄμμα συμβάλω τόδε.

Χο. ὦ πολλὰ μὲν τάλαινα, πολλὰ δ' αὖ σοφὴ
 γύναι, μακρὰν ἔτεινας. εἰ δ' ἐτητύμως

Thou knowest thine own doom, how, as some heaven-
led victim,

Patiently to the altar canst thou move?

Ka. There is no escape, friends, none, when time is full.

Ch. Yes, but time's last hour still is found the best.

Ka. The day is come. Little were gained by flight.

Ch. Truly a patient fortitude is thine.

Ka. Such praise none heareth to whom fate is kind.

Ch. Yet is there comfort in a glorious death.

Ka. Alas my father! thou and thy noble children!

Ch. Why dost thou start? What terror turns thee back?

Ka. Foul! Foul!

Ch. Why criest thou foul? Is it some brainsick loathing?

Ka. Horror this house exhales from blood-dript walls.

Ch. Nay, nay, 'tis naught but odours of hearth-sacrifice.

Ka. 'Tis such a reek as riseth from a sepulchre.

Yet will I enter, and there bewail my fate

And Agamemnon's. I have lived long enough.

Alas, my friends!

I clamour not like a bird that dreads a bush

Idly. When I am dead confirm my words,

When another woman for my death shall die,

And for a man ill-mated a man falls.

I claim this office as at point to die.

Ch. Poor wretch, I pity thy prophetic doom.

Ka. Yet once more would I speak—or is not this

My own dirge rather? To the sun I pray,

This last seen by me, that when my champions come,

My foes may pay murder's price for me too,

For this poor slave's death, their inglorious prey.

μόρον τὸν αὐτῆς οἶσθα, πῶς θεηλάτου
βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμὸν εὐτόλμως πατεῖς ; 740

Κα. οὐκ ἔστ' ἄλυσις, οὐ, ξένοι, χρόνον πλέω.

Χο. ὁ δ' ὕστατός γε τοῦ χρόνου πρεσβεύεται.

Κα. ἥκει τόδ' ἡμαρ· σμικρὰ κερδανῶ φυγῇ.

Χο. ἀλλ' ἴσθι τλήμων οὐσ' ἀπ' εὐτόλμου φρενός.

Κα. οὐδεὶς ἀκούει ταῦτα τῶν εὐδαιμόνων. 745

Χο. ἀλλ' εὐκλεῶς τοι κατθανεῖν χάρις βροτῶ.

Κα. ἰὼ πάτερ σοῦ τῶν τε γενναίων τέκνων.

Χο. τί δ' ἐστὶ χρήμα ; τίς σ' ἀποστρέφει φόβος ;

Κα. φεῦ φεῦ.

Χο. τί τοῦτ' ἔφευξας ; εἴ τι μὴ φρενῶν στύγος. 750

Κα. φόνον δόμοι πνέουσιν αἵματοσταγῇ.

Χο. καὶ πῶς ; τόδ' ὄξει θυμάτων ἐφεστίων.

Κα. ὅμοιος ἀτμὸς ὥσπερ ἐκ τάφου πρέπει.
ἀλλ' εἶμι κὰν δόμοισι κωκύσους' ἐμὴν
'Αγαμέμνονός τε μοῖραν. ἀρκείτω βίος. 755
ἰὼ ξένοι.

οὔτοι δυσοίζω θάμνον ὡς ὄρνις φόβῳ
ἄλλως· θανούσῃ μαρτυρεῖτέ μοι τόδε,
ὅταν γυνὴ γυναικὸς ἀντ' ἐμοῦ θάνῃ,
ἀνὴρ τε δυσδάμαρτος ἀντ' ἀνδρὸς πέσῃ. 760
ἐπιξενοῦμαι ταῦτα δ' ὡς θανουμένη.

Χο. ὦ τλήμων, οἰκτείρω σε θεσφάτου μόρου.

Κα. ἅπαξ ἔτ' εἰπεῖν ῥῆσιν ἢ θρήνον θέλω
ἐμὸν τὸν αὐτῆς. ἡλίου δ' ἐπεύχομαι
πρὸς ὕστατον φῶς τοῖς ἐμοῖς τιμαόροις 765
ἐχθροὺς φόνευσιν τοὺς ἐμοὺς τίνειν ὁμοῦ
δούλης θανούσης, εὐμαροῦς χειρώματος.

Alas for man's estate! His happiness
Shows like a sketch, a shadow: but his misery—
'Tis a picture by a wet sponge dashed clean out.
And this is the more pitiable by far.

[*Exit.*]

Ag. [*within*]. Ah me! I am smitten—to the heart, a
mortal stroke!

Ch. Silence! Who is that cries out as smitten by a
mortal wound?

Ag. Ah me! Again! A second time, a murderous
stroke!

Ch. I. Done is now the deed, I fear me. That is the death-
groan of the king.

Come let us consult, if haply some safe counsel we
may find.

2. This is my counsel, that we summon hither
A rescue of the townsfolk to the palace.

3. And I say, with all speed let us burst in,
And prove the foul deed while the sword yet drips.

[*As they are about to enter the palace, the scene opens
and discloses CLYTAEMNESTRA standing over the
bodies of AGAMEMNON and KASSANDRA.*]

Cl. All that I spoke before to serve the time,
I shall feel no shame now to contradict.
For how by avowing open hate to enemies,
Presumed to be our friends, could we build up
Destruction's toils too high to be overleapt?
By me long since against victory long-deferred
Was planned this duel, yet at last it came.
Here stand I where I struck, my work achieved.

ὦ βρότεια πράγματ'· εὐτυχοῦντα μὲν
σκιά τις ἂν πρέψειεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχῇ,
βολαῖς ὑγρώσσω· σπόγγος ὅλκεσεν γραφήν. 770
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐκείνων μᾶλλον οἰκτεῖρω πολὺ.

[Exit.]

Αγ. ὦ μοι, πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω.

Χο. σίγα· τίς πληγὴν αὐτεῖ καιρίως οὐτασμένος;

Αγ. ὦ μοι μάλ' αὖθις, δευτέραν πεπληγμένος.

Χο.Ι. τοῦργον εἰργάσθαι δοκεῖ μοι βασιλέως οἰμώ-
γματι. 775

ἀλλὰ κοινωσώμεθ' ἥν πως ἀσφαλῇ βουλεύματ'
ῆ.—

2. ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμῖν τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην λέγω,
πρὸς δῶμα δεῦρ' ἀστοῖσι κηρύσσειν βοήν.—

3. ἐμοὶ δ' ὅπως τάχιστα γ' ἐμπεσεῖν δοκεῖ
καὶ πρᾶγμ' ἐλέγχειν σὺν νεορρύτῳ ξίφει.— 780

[As they are about to enter the palace, the scene opens
and discloses CLYTEMNESTRA standing over the
bodies of AGAMEMNON and KASSANDRA.]

Κλ. πολλῶν πάροιθεν καιρίως εἰρημένων
τάναντί' εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἐπαισχυνθήσομαι.
πῶς γάρ τις ἐχθροῖς ἐχθρὰ πορσύνων, φίλοις
δοκοῦσιν εἶναι, πημονῆς ἀρκύστατ' ἂν
φράξειεν, ὕψος κρεῖσσον ἐκπηδήματος; 785
ἐμοὶ δ' ἀγὼν ὅδ' οὐκ ἀφρόντιστος πάλαι
νείκης παλαιᾶς ἦλθε, σὺν χρόνῳ γέ μῆν'
ἔστηκα δ' ἔνθ' ἔπαισ' ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις.

Even so I wrought—this too will I not deny—
That neither should he escape nor ward his doom.
A blind entanglement, like a net for fish,
I swathe around him, an evil wealth of robe.
And twice do I smite him, till at the second groan
There did his limbs sink down; and as he lies,
A third stroke do I deal him, unto Hades,
Safe-keeper of dead men, a votive gift.
Therewith he lies still, gasping out his life:
And spouting forth a vehement jet of blood
Strikes me with a dark splash of murderous dew,
No less rejoicing than in Heaven's sweet rain
The corn doth at the birth-throes of the ear.
The truth being such, ye grave elders of Argos,
Rejoice, if so ye may; but I exult.

Ch. We marvel at thine audacity of tongue
To glory in such terms over thy slain lord.

Cl. Ye assail me as though I were a witless woman.
But I with heart unshaken what all know
Declare—whether thou praise me or condemn,
'Tis all one—this is Agamemnon, mine
Own husband, done to death by this right hand's
Most righteous workmanship. The case stands so.

Ch. Woman, what earth-engendered
Venomous herb, or what evil drug,
Scum of the restless sea, canst thou have tasted of,
Thus to incur the loud fury of a people's curse?
Away thou hast cast, away thou hast cleft, away shall
the city fling thee,
A monstrous burden of loathing.

Cl. Yes, now for me thou doomest banishment,
A city's loathing and a people's curses:

οὕτω δ' ἔπραξα, καὶ τὰδ' οὐκ ἄρνήσομαι·
 ὥς μήτε φεύγειν μήτ' ἀμύνεσθαι μόρον, 790
 ἄπειροι ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων,
 περιστιχίζω, πλούτον εἵματος κακόν.
 παίω δέ νιν δῖς· καὶ δυοῖν οἰμώγμασιν
 μεθῆκεν αὐτοῦ κῶλα· καὶ πεπτωκότι
 τρίτην ἐπενδίδωμι, τοῦ κατὰ χθονὸς 795

Ἄιδου νεκρῶν σωτῆρος εὐκταίαν χάριν.
 οὕτω τὸν αὐτοῦ θυμὸν ὀρμαίνει πεσών·
 κακφυσιῶν ὀξεῖαν αἵματος σφαγὴν
 βάλλει μ' ἐρεμνῇ ψακάδι φοινίας δρόσου,
 χαίρουσαν οὐδὲν ἦσσαν ἢ διοσδότῳ 800
 γάνει σπορητὸς κάλυκος ἐν λοχεύμασιν.
 ὥς ὧδ' ἐχόντων, πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε,
 χαίρουτ' ἄν, εἰ χαίρουτ', ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεύχομαι.

Χο. θαυμάζουμέν σου γλῶσσαν, ὥς θρασύστομος,
 ἥτις τοιόνδ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ κομπάζεις λόγον. 805

Κλ. πειρᾶσθέ μου γυναικὸς ὡς ἀφραίσμονος·
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀτρέστῳ καρδίᾳ πρὸς εἰδότας
 λέγω· σὺ δ' αἰνεῖν εἴτε με ψέγειν θέλεις
 ὅμοιον. οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀγαμέμνων, ἐμὸς
 πόσις, νεκρὸς δέ, τῇσδε δεξιᾷς χερὸς 810
 ἔργον, δικαίας τέκτονος. τὰδ' ὧδ' ἔχει.

Χο. τί κακὸν, ὦ γύναι, χθοιοῖσ' ἔδανόν ἢ ποτὸν
 πασαμένα ρυτᾶς ἐξ ἁλὸς ὄρμενον
 τὸδ' ἐπέθου θύος, δημοθρόους τ' ἀράς;
 ἀπέδικες τ' ἀπέταμές τ'· ἀπόπολις δ' ἔσει 815
 μῖσος ὄβριμον ἀστοῖς.

Κλ. νῦν μὲν δικάζεις ἐκ πόλεως φυγὴν ἐμοὶ
 καὶ μῖσος ἀστών δημόθρους τ' ἔχειν ἀράς,

Yet once no whit didst thou withstand this man,
 Who reeking not, as 'twere a beast that died,
 Although his woolly flocks bare sheep enough,
 Sacrificed his own child, that dear delight
 Born of my pangs, to charm the winds of Thrace.

Ch. Insolent is thy mood,
 Thine utterance arrogant. Therefore even
 As with the deed of blood frenzied is now thy soul,
 So doth a gory smear fitly adorn thy brow.
 With none to avenge, none to befriend, verily yet shall
 Stroke for stroke in reprisal. [you pay

Cl. This likewise shalt thou hear, my solemn oath:
 By the Justice here accomplished for my child,
 By the Sin and Doom, whose victim here I have slain,
 Not for me doth Hope tread the halls of Fear,
 While yet fire on my hearth is kindled by
 Aegisthus, my kind friend as heretofore.
 For yonder, no small shield for our assurance,
 Lies low the man who outraged his own wife,
 Darling of each Chryseis under Troy,
 And by him this bond-slave and augurress,
 His oracle-delivering concubine,
 Who, as his faithful couch-mate, shared with him
 The mariners' bench. But punished are they now.
 For he fare thus: and she, now she has wailed
 Swan-like her last lamenting song of death,
 Lies there, his lover, adding a delicate
 New seasoning to the luxury of my couch.

Ch. Oh for a speedy death, painless without a throe,
 No lingering bedridden sickness,
 A gentle death, bearing sleep eternal,

οὐδὲν τότ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἐναντίον φέρων·
 ὃς οὐ προτιμῶν, ὥσπερ εἰ βοτοῦ μόρον,
 μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν,
 ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, φιλάττην ἐμοὶ
 ὠδῖν', ἐπ' ὠδὸν Θρηκίων ἀημάτων.

Χο. μεγαλόμητις εἰ, περίφρονα δ' ἔλκεες· ὥσπερ αἶψα
 φορολιβεῖ τύχα φρὴν ἐπιμαίνεται·
 λίπος ἐπ' ὀμμάτων αἵματος ἐμπρέπει·
 ἀτίετον δ' ἔτι σὲ χρὴ στερομέναν φίλων
 τύμμα τύμματι τίσαι.

Κλ. καὶ τήνδ' ἀκούεις ὀρκίων ἐμῶν θέμιν·
 μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην,
 Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ', αἴσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγώ,
 οὐ μοι φόβου μέλαθρον ἐλπίς ἐμπατεῖ,
 ἕως ἂν αἴθῃ πῦρ ἐφ' ἐστίας ἐμῆς
 Λίγισθος, ὡς τὸ πρῶσθαι εὐφροῶν ἐμῇ.
 οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀσπίς οὐ σκαιρὰ θεάσσου·
 κεῖται γυναικὸς τῆσδε λυμαντήριος.
 Χρυσήϊδων μείλιγμα τῶν ὑπ' Ἰλίου·
 ἢ τ' αἰχμάλωτος ἦδε καὶ τερασκόπος
 καὶ κοινόλεκτρος τοῦδε, θεσφατηλόγος
 πιστὴ ξύνευνος, ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων
 ἰσοτριβής. ἄτιμα δ' οὐκ ἐπραξάτην.
 ὁ μὲν γὰρ οὕτως, ἡ δέ τοι κύκνου δίκην
 τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον
 κεῖται φιλήτωρ τῷδ', ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπήγαγεν
 εὐνῆς παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆν.

Χο. φεῦ, τίς ἂν ἐν τάχει, μὴ περιώδυνος,
 μηδὲ δεμνιοτήρης,
 μόλοι τὸν αἰὲ φέρουσ' ἐν ἡμῖν

Sleep without end, for to us the kindest,
Truest of guardians is lost,
Who for a woman's sin endured toils untold;
Yea, and by a woman's hand he fell.

Demon, who o'er the house broodest, and o'er the twi-
Branching Tantalid offspring,
And through the wives, equals in destruction,
Wieldest a power, to my heart an anguish!
Now on the carcase like a loathed
Carrion crow perched he stands, and gloryingly
Chanting forth croaks his tuneless hymn.

Cl. Now thy judgment hast thou amended,
Since thou accusest
The thrice-gorged demon of this whole lineage.
For from him is bred this lust of the heart
For blood to be lapped—ere yet the old woe
Is over and gone, ever fresh gore.

Ch. Ay me! Ay me! My king, my king!
How shall I weep thee?
What word shall I speak from a loving heart?
In this spider's web to be lying thus caught,
By a foul death gasping thy soul forth!
Ah me, me! couched thus shamefully like a slave,
Stricken down by a deadly hand
Craftily armed with a cleaving sword-blade!

Cl. Do you dare to avouch this deed to be mine?
Nay, fancy not even
That in me Agamemnon's spouse you behold:
But disguised as the wife of the man who is slain
Yonder, the ancient wrathful Avenger
Of Atreus, that grim feaster, hath found

Μοῖρ' ἀτέλευτον ὕπνον, δαμέντος
 φύλακος εὐμενεστάτου
 πολέα τλάντος γυναικὸς διαί;
 πρὸς γυναικὸς δ' ἀπέφθισεν.

850

δαῖμον, ὃς ἐμπίτνεις δώμασι καὶ
 διφυίοισι Τανταλίδαισιν,
 κράτος τ' ἰσόψυχον ἐκ γυναικῶν
 καρδιόδηκτον ἐμοὶ κρατύνεις.
 ἐπὶ δὲ σώματος δίκαν μοι
 κόρακος ἐχθροῦ σταθεῖς ἐκνόμως
 ὕμνον ὑμνεῖν ἐπεύχεται.

855

Κλ. νῦν δ' ὥρθωσας στόματος γνώμην,
 τὸν τριπάχυντον
 δαίμονα γέννης τῆσδε κικλήσκων.
 ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἔρος αἵματολοιχὸς
 νειριτροφεῖται, πρὶν καταλῆξαι
 τὸ παλαιὸν ἄχος, νέος ἰχώρ.

860

865

Χο. ἰὼ ἰὼ βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ,
 πῶς σε δακρύσω;
 φρενὸς ἐκ φιλίας τί ποτ' εἶπω;
 κῆσαι δ' ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι τῷδ'
 ἀσεβεῖ θανάτῳ βίον ἐκπνέων.
 ὦμοι μοι κοίταν τάνδ' ἀνελεύθερον
 δολίῳ μόρῳ δαμείς
 ἐκ χερὸς ἀμφιτόμῳ βελέμενῳ.

870

Κλ. αὐχεῖς εἶναι τόδε τοῦργον ἐμόν·
 μηδ' ἐπιλεχθῆς
 Ἄγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.
 φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ
 τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ
 Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος

875

Yonder a full-grown
Victim for the ghosts of the children.

Ch. That thou of the blood here shed
Art innocent, who shall essay to witness?
No, no! Yet the fiend avenging
The father's sin may have aided.
And swept along on floods of gore
From slaughtered kindred by the red
Deity of Strife, he comes where he must pay now
For the caked blood of the mangled infants.

Cl. What, did not he too wreak on his household
As crafty a crime?
Nay but the branch he grafted upon me,
My long-wept-for Iphigeneia,
Even as he dealt with her, so is he faring:
Therefore in Hades let him not boast now.
As he sinned by the sword,
So is death by the sword his atonement.

Ch. In blank amaze, reft of thought's resourceful
Counselling aid, I know not
Which way to turn, now the house is falling.
I dread the fierce, crashing storm that wrecks the home,
The storm of blood. Ceased is now the small rain.
But Justice is but whetting for some other deed
Of bale her sword's edge on other whetstones.

Ay me! Earth, Earth! Would thou hadst covered me,
Or ere in the silver-sided bath
Outstretched in death I had seen him!
Who shall make his grave? Who shall sing his dirge?
Who by the tomb of the deified hero weeping

τόνδ' ἀπέτισεν,
τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας. 880

Χο. ὥς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων;
πῶ πῶ; πατρόθεν δὲ συλλή-
πτωρ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀλάστωρ. 885
βιάζεται δ' ὁμυσπόροις
ἐπιρροαῖσιν αἱμάτων
μέλας Ἴδρης, ὅποι δίκαν προβαίνων
πάχνηα κουροβόρῳ παρέξει.

Κλ. οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτος δολίαν ἄτην
οἴκοισιν ἔθηκ';
ἀλλ' ἐμὸν ἐκ τοῦδ' ἔρνος ἀερθέν,
τὴν πολυκλαύτην Ἴφιγενείαν,
ἄξια δράσας ἄξια πάσχων
μηδὲν ἐν Ἰδιδου μεγαλαυχείτω, 895
ξιφοδηλήτῳ
θανάτῳ τίσας ἄπερ ἤρξεν.

Χο. ἀμηχανῶ φροντίδος στερηθεῖς
εὐπάλαμον μέριμναν
ὅπα τράπωμαι, πίτνοντος οἴκου. 900
δέδοικα δ' ὄμβρου κτύπον δομοσφαλῇ
τὸν αἱματηρόν· ψακὰς δὲ λήγει.
Δίκη δ' ἐπ' ἄλλο πρᾶγμα θηγάνει βλάβης
πρὸς ἄλλαις θηγάναισιν ἴσορ.

ἰὼ γὰ γὰ, εἴθ' ἔμ' ἐδέξω,
πρὶν τόνδ' ἐπιδεῖν ἀργυροτοίχου
δροίτας κατέχοντα χαμεύνην.
τίς ὁ θάψων νιν; τίς ὁ θρηνήσων;
τίς δ' ἐπιτύμβιον αἶνον ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θείῳ 910

Shall chant his praise, and bowed down
In unfeigned grief of heart lament him?

Cl. Thee it beseems not herein to concern thee:
No, for beneath *us*
He bowed, he lay dead, and below shall we bury him,
Not to a mourning household's dirges,
But Iphigeneia with welcome blithe,
As a daughter should,
Shall encounter her sire at the swift-flowing strait
Of Wailing, and there
Fling around him her arms and shall kiss him.

Ch. Reviling thus answereth reviling.
Hard to adjudge the strife seems.
The spoiler is spoiled, the slayer pays reprisal.
While on his throne Zeus abides, abides the truth:
Who doth the deed, suffereth: so the law stands.
Who from the house shall cast the brood of curses
 forth?
The whole race is welded fast to ruin.

Cl. When you stumbled upon this saw, 'twas truth
Led thee. But I now
With the fiend of the Pleisthenid race consent
This treaty to swear: what is done, we accept,
Hard be it to bear, if he will but quit
Henceforth this house, and afflict with kindred
Murder some other race instead.
Though mine be a small
Portion of wealth, that in full shall suffice me,
If I thus may cleanse
These halls from the frenzy of blood-feud.

ξὺν δακρύοις ἰάπτων
ἀλαθείᾳ φρενῶν πονήσει;

Κλ. οὐ σὲ προσήκει τὸ μέλημ' ἀλέγειν
τοῦτο· πρὸς ἡμῶν
κάππεσε, κάτθανε, καὶ καταθάψομεν 915
οὐχ ὑπὸ κλαυθμῶν τῶν ἐξ οἴκων, ...
ἀλλ' Ἰφιγένειά νιν ἀσπασίως
θυγάτηρ, ὡς χρή,
πατέρ' ἀντιάσασα πρὸς ὠκύπορον
πόρθμευμ' ἀχέων 920
περὶ χεῖρε βαλοῦσα φιλήσει.

Χο. ὄνειδος ἦκει τόδ' ἀντ' ὀνείδους.
δύσμαχα δ' ἔστι κρῖναι.
φέρει φέροντ', ἐκτίνει δ' ὁ καίνων.
μῖμνει δὲ μίμνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διὸς 925
παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα· θέσμιον γάρ.
τίς ἂν γονὰν ἀραῖον ἐκβάλοι δόμων;
κεκόλληται γένος πρὸς ἄτα.

Κλ. ἐς τόνδ' ἐνέβης ξὺν ἀληθείᾳ
χρησμόν. ἐγὼ δ' οὔν 930
ἐθέλω δαίμονι τῷ Πλεισθενιδῶν
ὄρκους θεμένῃ τάδε μὲν στέργειν,
δύστλητά περ ὄνθ'· ὁ δὲ λοιπόν, ἰόντ'
ἐκ τῶνδε δόμων ἄλλην γενεὰν
τρίβειν θανάτοις αὐθένταισι· 935
κτεάνων τε μέρος
βαιὸν ἐχούσῃ πᾶν ἀπόχρη μοι
μανίας μελάθρων
ἀλληλοφόνους ἀφελούσῃ.

[*Enter AEGISTHUS attended by a body-guard
of spearmen.*]

AEGISTHUS

O glad dawn of the day that brings redress!
Now can I say that from above earth Gods
Look down to avenge the sorrows of mankind,
Now that I see this man in woven robes
Of Retribution stretched dead to my joy,
Paying in full for a father's crafty sin.
For Atreus, lord of Argos, this man's sire,
Atreus, with zeal scarce welcome to my father,
Feigning to hold a joyful feasting day,
Served him a banquet of his children's flesh.
The extremities, the feet and fingered hands,
He kept concealed, the rest disguised he set
Before Thyestes, where he sat apart:
Who at the first unwitting took and ate
That food now proved unwholesome to his race.
Then, recognizing the unhallowed deed,
He groaned, and falls back vomiting the sacrifice,
And calls a fell doom on the sons of Pelops,
Kicking the table away to aid his curse:
That thus might perish all the race of Pleisthenes.
For such cause do you see this man laid low;
And justly so did I contrive this slaughter.
While yet I dwelt abroad I reached my foe,
Weaving this dark conspiracy's whole plot.
Thus glorious were death itself to me,
Now I have seen him caught in toils of Justice.

Ch. Aegisthus, I scorn to insult distress:

But dost thou own wilfully to have slain him,
And alone to have contrived this woeful murder,

[Enter AEGISTHUS attended by a body-guard
of spearmen.]

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὦ φέγγος εὐφρον ἡμέρας δικηφόρου. 940
φαίην ἂν ἤδη νῦν βροτῶν τιμαόρους
θεοὺς ἄνωθεν γῆς ἐποπτεύειν ἄχῃ,
ιδὼν ὑφαντοῖς ἐν πέπλοις Ἐρινύων
τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε κείμενον φίλως ἐμοί,
χερὸς πατρώας ἐκτίνοντα μηχανάς. 945
Ἄτρεὺς γὰρ ἄρχων τῆσδε γῆς, τοῦτου πατὴρ
Ἄτρεὺς, προθύμως μᾶλλον ἢ φίλως, πατρὶ
τῷ μῶ, κρεουργὸν ἡμᾶρ εὐθύμως ἄγειν
δοκῶν, παρέσχε δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν.
τὰ μὲν ποδήρη καὶ χερῶν ἄκρους κτένας 950
ἔκρυπτ' ἄνωθεν ἄνδρ' ἐκὰς καθήμενον
ἄσῃμ'. ὁ δ' αὐτῶν αὐτίκ' ἀγνοία λαβὼν
ἔσθαι βορὰν ἄσωντον, ὡς ὀρέῃς, γένει.
κᾶπειτ' ἐπιγνοὺς ἔργον οὐ καταίσιον
ᾧ μωξεν, ἀμπίπτει δ' ἀπὸ σφαγῆν ἐρῶν, 955
μόρον δ' ἄφερτον Πελοπίδαις ἐπεύχεται,
λίκτισμα δείπνου ξυνδίκως τιθεὶς ἀρᾷ,
οὕτως ὀλέσθαι πᾶν τὸ Πλεισθένους γένος.
ἐκ τῶνδ' ἐσσι πεσόντα τόνδ' ἰδεῖν πάρα.
καὶ γὰρ δίκαιος τοῦδε τοῦ φόνου ῥαφεὺς. 960
καὶ τοῦδε τάνδρ' ἡψάμην θυραῖος ὦν,
πᾶσαν συνάψας μηχανὴν δυσβουλίας.
οὕτω καλὸν δὴ καὶ τὸ κατθανεῖν ἐμοί,
ιδόντα τοῦτον τῆς δίκης ἐν ἔρκεσιν.

Χο. Αἴγισθ', ὑβρίζειν ἐν κακοῖσιν οὐ σέβω. 965
σὺ δ' ἄνδρα τόνδε φῆς ἐκὼν κατακτανεῖν,
μόνος δ' ἐποικτον τόνδε βουλευσαι φόνον·

Know thine own head, judged guilty, shall not scape
The curses of a people flung in stones.

Ae. Thou to prate so, benched at the lowest oar,
While those of the upper tier control the ship!
Your old age shall be told how bitter it is
To be schooled in discreetness at your years.
Bonds and the pangs of hunger are supreme
Physicians to instruct even senile minds
In wisdom. Doth not this sight make thee see?
Kick not against the pricks, lest the wound smart.

Ch. Thou woman, in wait for returning warriors,
Lurking at home, defiling a man's bed—
For a mighty captain didst thou plot this death?

Ae. These words likewise shall prove the source of tears.

Ch. Thou to be despot of our Argive folk,
Who durst not, when thou hadst contrived his death,
Durst not achieve the crime with thine own hand.

Ae. The beguiling was the wife's part manifestly.
I was suspected, a foe by my birth.
Now with the dead king's treasure will I strive
To rule this people: but the mutinous man
I shall yoke sternly, not like a corn-fed colt
In traces; no, but grim starvation, lodged
With darkness, shall not leave him till he is tamed.

Ch. Why, craven soul, didst thou not kill thy foe
Unaided, but must join with thee a woman,
Defilement of our country and its Gods,
To slay him? Oh, is Orestes living yet,
That he by fortune's grace returning home
Victoriously may put both these to death?

Ae. Nay, if thus in word and deed you threaten, soon
shall you be taught.

οὐ φημ' ἀλύξειν ἐν δίκη τὸ σὸν κῆρα
δημορριφεῖς, σάφ' ἴσθι, λευσίμους ἀράς.

Αι. σὺ ταῦτα φωνεῖς νερτέρᾳ προσήμενος 970
κώπη, κρατούντων τῶν ἐπὶ ζυγῷ δορός;
γνώσει γέρων ὦν ὡς διδάσκεσθαι βαρὺ
τῷ τηλικούτῳ, σωφρονεῖν εἰρημένον.
δεσμὸς δὲ καὶ τὸ γῆρας αἶ τε νήστιδες
δύαι διδάσκειν ἐξοχώταται φρενῶν 975
ἱατρομάντεις. οὐχ ὀρᾶς ὀρῶν τάδε;
πρὸς κέντρα μὴ λάκτιζε, μὴ παίσας μογῆς.

Χο. γύναι, σὺ τοὺς ἤκοντας ἐκ μάχης μένων
οἰκουρὸς εὐνὴν ἀνδρὸς αἰσχύνων ἅμα
ἀνδρὶ στρατηγῷ τόνδ' ἐβούλευσας μόρον; 980

Αι. καὶ ταῦτα τᾶπη κλαυμάτων ἀρχηγεινῇ.

Χο. ὡς δὴ σύ μοι τύραννος Ἀργείων ἔσει,
ὃς οὐκ, ἐπειδὴ τῷδ' ἐβούλευσας μόρον,
δρᾶσαι τόδ' ἔργον οὐκ ἔτλης αὐτοκτόνως.

Αι. τὸ γὰρ δολῶσαι πρὸς γυναικὸς ἦν σαφῶς· 985
ἐγὼ δ' ὑποπτος ἐχθρὸς ἦ παλαιγενής.
ἐκ τῶν δὲ τοῦδε χρημάτων πειράσομαι
ἄρχειν πολιτῶν· τὸν δὲ μὴ πειθάνορα
ζεύξω βαρεῖαις οὔτι μοι σειραφόρον
κριθῶντα πῶλον· ἀλλ' ὁ δυσφιλεῖ σκότῳ 990
λιμὸς ξύνοικος μαλθακὸν σφ' ἐπόψεται.

Χο. τί δὴ τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδ' ἀπὸ ψυχῆς κακῆς
οὐκ αὐτὸς ἠνάριζες, ἀλλὰ νιν γυνὴ
χώρας μίασμα καὶ θεῶν ἐγχωρίων
ἔκτειν'; Ὁρέστης ἄρά που βλέπει φάος, 995
ὅπως κατελθὼν δεῦρο πρευμαίνει τύχῃ
ἀμφοῖν γένηται τοῖνδε παγκρατῆς φονεὺς;

Αι. ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δοκεῖς τίδ' ἔρδειν καὶ λέγειν, γνώσει
τάχα.

Forward now, my trusty spearmen! Here is work
for us at hand.

SOLDIERS

Forward now! His sword unsheathing, each man
stand upon his guard.

Ch. Nay, I too, my sword unsheathing, shrink not back,
though I must die.

So. Die, thou sayest. The word is welcome. Ours be
now to make it good.

Cl. Nay forbear, my dearest husband. Let us do no
further ill.

Miseries are here to reap in plenty, a pitiable crop.
Harm enough is done already: let no blood by us be
spilt.

Then if haply these afflictions prove enough, there
let us stop,

Sorely smitten thus already by the heavy heel of fate.
Sodotha woman's reason counsel, if so be that any heed.

Ae. But for these to let their foolish tongues thus
blossom into speech,

Flinging out such overweening words, as though to
tempt their fate!

Ch. Never was it Argive fashion to fawn upon a
villainous man.

Ae. Well, I'll visit this upon you soon or late in days
to come.

Ch. That thou shalt not, if but Heaven guide Orestes
back to his home.

Ae. Yes, I know full well myself how banished men
will feed on hopes.

Ch. Do thy worst; wax fat, befouling righteousness,
while yet thou mayest.

εἶα δῆ, φίλοι λοχῖται, τοῦργον οὐχ ἑκάς τόδε.

ΛΟΧΙΤΑΙ

εἶα δῆ, ξίφος πρόκωπον πᾶς τις εὐτρεπιζέτω.

Χο. ἀλλὰ μὴν κἀγὼ πρόκωπος οὐκ ἀναίνομαι θανεῖν.

Λο. δεχομένοις λέγεις θανεῖν σε· τὴν τύχην δ' αἰρού-
μεθα. 1002

Κλ. μηδαμῶς, ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἄλλα δράσωμεν
κακά.

ἀλλὰ καὶ τάδ' ἐξαμῆσαι πολλὰ δύστηνον θέρος·
πημονῆς δ' ἄλις γ' ὑπάρχει· μηδὲν αἵματώμεθα.
εἰ δέ τοι μόχθων γένοιτο τῶνδ' ἄλις, δεχοίμεθ'
ἄν, 1006

δαίμονος χηλῇ βαρεῖα δυστυχῶς πεπληγμένοι.
ὦδ' ἔχει λόγος γυναικός, εἴ τις ἀξιοῖ μαθεῖν.

Αι. ἀλλὰ τούσδ' ἐμοὶ ματαίαν γλῶσσαν ὦδ' ἀπαν-
θίσαι
κἀκβαλεῖν ἔπη τοιαῦτα δαίμονος πειρωμένους.

Χο. οὐκ ἂν Ἀργείων τόδ' εἴη, φῶτα προσσαίνειν
κακόν. 1011

Αι. ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σ' ἐν ὑστέραισιν ἡμέραις μέτειμ' ἔτι.

Χο. οὐκ, εἰ δαίμων Ὀρέστην δεῦρ' ἀπευθύνη
μολεῖν.

Αι. οἶδ' ἐγὼ φεύγοντας ἄνδρας ἐλπίδας σιτουμένους.

Χο. πρᾶσσε, πιαίνου, μιαίνων τὴν δίκην, ἐπεὶ πάρα.

Ac. Take my warning; for this folly thou shalt make
amends some day.

Ch. Brag: be valiant like a cock who crows and struts
beside his hen.

Cl. Treat with the contempt they merit these vain
yelpings. Thou and I,

Now the masters in this palace, will rule all things
righteously.

Αι. ἴσθι μοι δώσων ἄποινα τῇσδε μωρίας χρόνῳ.

Χο. κόμπασον θαρσῶν, ἀλέκτωρ ὥστε θηλείας
πέλας.

Κλ. μὴ προτιμῆσης ματαίων τῶνδ' ὑλαγμάτων· ἐγὼ
καὶ σὺ θήσομεν κρατοῦντε τῶνδε δωμάτων
καλῶς.

1019

THE CHOEPHORI
OF
AESCHYLUS

THE CHOEPHORI

[*The grave of Agamemnon, near the palace of Argos.*]

ORESTES

Nether Hermes, guardian of paternal rights,
Preserve me and fight with me at my prayer.
Over this grave's mound on my sire I call
To hearken, to give heed.
I was not there, father, to wail thy death,
Nor did I stretch my hand towards thy bier.

[*Enter ELECTRA and the CHORUS.*]

What is it I see? What is this troop of women
Approaching in conspicuous black robes
Of mourning? To what cause should I assign it?
Hath some new sorrow fallen upon the house?
Or should I guess they are bringing these libations
To appease my father in the world below?
Naught else? Yonder, it must be, walks Electra,
My sister. By the bitterness of her grief
I know her. O Zeus, grant me now to avenge
My sire's death; on my side deign thou to fight.
Pylades, stand we aside, that I may learn
More surely who these suppliant women are.

CHORUS

"Go," said she, "from the palace bear
Libations forth, with sharp resounding stroke of hand."
Behold, my cheek is newly scarred with crimson,

THE CHOEPHORI

[*The grave of Agamemnon, near the palace of Argos.*]

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

Ἑρμῇ χθόνιε πατρῷ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη,
σωτήρ γενοῦ μοι ξύμμαχός τ' αἰτουμένω·
τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὅχθῳ τῷδε κηρύσσω πατρὶ
κλύειν, ἀκοῦσαι.

οὐ γὰρ παρῶν ὄμωξα σόν, πάτερ, μόρον 5
οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἐκφορᾷ νεκροῦ.

[*Enter ELECTRA and the CHORUS.*]

τί χρῆμα λεύσσω; τίς ποθ' ἴδ' ὁμήγυρις
στείχει γυναικῶν φάρεσιν μελαγχίμοις
πρέπουσα; ποῖα ξυμφορᾷ προσεικάσω;
πότερα δόμοισι πῆμα προσκυρεῖ νέον; 10
ἢ πατρὶ τῷμῳ τάσδ' ἐπείκασας τύχῳ
χοᾶς φερούσας νερτέροις μειλίγματα;
οὐδέν ποτ' ἄλλο· καὶ γὰρ Ἥλέκτραν δοκῶ
στείχειν ἀδελφὴν τὴν ἐμὴν πένθει λυγρῷ
πρέπουσαν. ὦ Ζεῦ, δός με τίσασθαι μόρον 15
πατρός, γενοῦ δὲ σύμμαχος θέλων ἐμοί.
Πυλάδῃ, σταθῶμεν ἐκποδῶν, ὥς ἂν σαφῶς
μάθῳ γυναικῶν ἥτις ἦδε προστροπή.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰαλτὸς ἐκ δόμων ἔβαν [στρ. α.
χοᾶς προπομπὸς ὀξύχειρι σὺν κτύπῳ. 20
πρέπει παρὴς φοινίοις ἀμυγμοῖς

Rent by the bloodily furrowing nail!
At all hours feeds my heart on lamentation ceaselessly.
A scream was heard of linen torn,
As in my agony I ripped it up,
These folds o'er my breast,
Robes cruelly mangled,
Victims of my joyless task.

For thrilling Fear with lifted hair,
Prophetic to the house in dreams, and breathing wrath
From sleep, at dead of night with panic outcry
Uttered a shriek from the inner recess,
A fierce wail, bursting on the chamber where the women
And they who read this dream declared, [slept.
Pledging a verity by heaven revealed,
That ghosts underground,
Souls wrathfully plaintive,
Still against their slayers raged.

To avert such horror, the impious woman who sends
(Alas, Earth, Mother!) [me forth,
Plans a vain appeasement
That can ne'er appease. But I
Fear to speak the words she bade.
For what redemption can there be for blood once
Woe for this miserable hearth! [spilt?
Woe for this house to ruin doomed!
A sunless gloom, abhorred of men,
A shroud of hate broods o'er a house
Death-bereaved of its master.

That venerable, resistless, invincible majesty,
That once found a way through
The ears and hearts of all men,

ὄνυχος ἄλοκι νεοτόμῳ,
δι' αἰῶνος δ' ἱγμοῖσι βόσκεται κέαρ.

λινοφθόροι δ' ὑφασμάτων
λακίδες ἔφλαδον ὑπ' ἄλγεσιν, 25
πρόστερνοι στολμοὶ
πέπλων ἀγελάστοις
ξυμφοραῖς πεπληγμένων.

τορὸς γὰρ ὀρθόθριξ φόβος, [ἀντ. α.
δόμων ὀνειρόμαντις, ἐξ ὕπνου κότον 30
πνέων, ἀωρόνυκτον ἀμβόαμα
μυχόθεν ἔλακε περὶ φόβῳ,
γυναικείοισιν ἐν δώμασιν βαρὺς πίτνων.
κριταί τε τῶνδ' ὀνειράτων
θεόθεν ἔλακον ὑπέγγυοι 35
μέμφεσθαι τοὺς γὰς
νέρθεν περιθύμως
τοῖς κτανοῦσί τ' ἐγκοτεῖν.

τοιῶνδε χάριν ἀχάριτον ἀπότροπον κακῶν, [στρ. β.
ἰὼ γαῖα μαῖα, 40
μωμένα μ' ἰάλλει
δύσθεος γυνά. φοβοῦ-
μαι δ' ἔπος τόδ' ἐκβαλεῖν.
τί γὰρ λύτρον πεσόντος αἵματος πέδοι; 45
ἰὼ πάνοιζυς ἐστία,
ἰὼ κατασκαφαὶ δόμων.
ἀνήλιοι βροτοστυγεῖς
δνόφοι καλύπτουσι δόμους
δεσποτῶν θανάτοισι. 50

σέβας δ' ἄμαχον ἀδάματον ἀπόλεμον τὸ πρὶν [ἀντ. β.
δι' ὧτων φρενός τε
δαμίας περαῖνου

Now has fallen away. 'Tis Fear
 Reigns instead. Prosperity—
 That among mortals is a god, and more than god.
 But Justice, watching with her scale,
 On some by daylight swiftly swoops,
 Or in the borderland of dark
 Her lingering wrath ripening bides:
 Others utterly the night whelms.

ELECTRA

Maidens, who serve our house and give it order,
 While I pour forth these funeral offerings,
 How must I speak, how pray, to appease my sire?
 Shall I say that I bring a gift of love
 From wife to loving husband—from my mother?
 Nay, that I dare not. I know not what to say.

Ch. While you pour, utter blessings for the loyal.

El. To whom shall I give that name among our friends?

Ch. First to thyself, and all who hate Aegisthus.

El. For myself must I pray then, and for thee?

Ch. You know the truth: 'tis yours now to decide.

El. Whom else then to this company should I add?

Ch. Remember Orestes, banished though he be.

El. 'Tis well said. Wisely have you admonished me.

Ch. Next, mindful of those guilty of that bloodshed—

El. Well, what? Direct me: instruct my ignorance.

Ch. Pray that upon them come some god or mortal—

El. To judge or to avenge? Which do you mean?

Ch. Say simply this: "one to take life for life."

El. Is that a holy prayer for me to utter?

Ch. Why not?—to requite foes with injury!

El. Mighty Herald between worlds above and under,

Aid me, O nether Hermes, summoning

νῦν ἀφίσταται. φοβεῖ- 55
 ται δέ τις. τὸ δ' εὐτυχεῖν
 τόδ' ἐν βροτοῖς θεός τε καὶ θεοῦ πλέον.
 ῥοπή δ' ἐπισκοπεῖ δίκας
 ταχεῖα τοὺς μὲν ἐν φάει,
 τὰ δ' ἐν μεταιχμίῳ σκότου 60
 μένει χρονίζοντι βρύει,
 τοὺς δ' ἄκρατος ἔχει νύξ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δμῳαὶ γυναῖκες, δωμάτων εὐθήμονες,
 τί φῶ χέουσα τάσδε κηδείους χοάς ;
 πῶς εὐφρον' εἶπω, πῶς κατεύξωμαι πατρί ; 65
 πότερα λέγουσα παρὰ φίλης φίλῳ φέρειν
 γυναικὸς ἀνδρί, τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πάρα ;
 τῶνδ' οὐ πάρεστι θάρσος, οὐδ' ἔχω τί φῶ.

Χο. φθέγγου χέουσα κεδνὰ τοῖσιν εὐφροσιν.

Ηλ. τίνας δὲ τούτους τῶν φίλων προσενέπω ; 70

Χο. πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὴν χῶστις Λιγισθοῖν στυγεῖ.

Ηλ. ἐμοί τε καὶ σοί τάρ' ἐπεύξωμαι τάδε ;

Χο. αὐτὴ σὺ ταῦτα μαυθάνουσ' ἤδη φράσαι.

Ηλ. τί ν' οὖν ἔτ' ἄλλον τῇδε προστιθῶ στάσει ;

Χο. μέμνησ' Ὀρέστου, κεῖ θυραῖός ἐσθ' ὅμως. 75

Ηλ. εὖ τοῦτο, κάφρένωσας οὐχ ἥκιστα με.

Χο. τοῖς αἰτίοις νυν τοῦ φόνου μεμνημένη

Ηλ. τί φῶ ; δίδασκ' ἄπειρον ἐξηγουμένη.

Χο. ἐλθεῖν τιν' αὐτοῖς δαίμον' ἢ βροτῶν τινα

Ηλ. πότερα δικαστὴν ἢ δικηφόρον λέγεις ; 80

Χο. ἀπλῶς τι φράζουσ', ὅστις ἀνταποκτενεῖ.

Ηλ. καὶ ταῦτά μοῦστί ν' εὐσεβῇ θεῶν πάρα ;

Χο. πῶς δ' οὐ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἀνταμείβεσθαι κακοῖς ;

Ηλ. κῆρυξ μέγιστε τῶν ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω,
 ἄρηξον, Ἑρμῇ χθόνιε, κηρύξας ἐμοί, 85

The powers beneath the earth to hear my prayers
Uttered for wrongs done to a father's home.

Pouring this lustral water to dead men,

I call upon my sire: Have pity on me.

With dear Orestes kindle thy dark halls.

And for me grant that I prove chaster far

Than was my mother, more innocent my hand.

For us these prayers. But for our adversaries

One to avenge thee, father, I bid rise,

And that thy slayers justly in turn be slain.

Or. Tell the Gods that thy prayers have been fulfilled,
And pray hereafter for like good success.

El. Why, for what boon have I to thank them now?

Or. The sight of that for which thou hast prayed so long.

El. Whom canst thou know that I was summoning?

Or. Whom but Orestes, the idol of thy soul?

El. And what proof have I that my prayers are answered?

Or. Here am I. Seek no nearer friend than me.

El. O Sir, is this some snare you are weaving round me?

Or. Against myself then am I framing it.

El. I see you wish to mock at my afflictions.

Or. Then at my own too, if indeed at thine.

El. As if thou wert Orestes then I bid thee....

Or. Nay, 'tis himself thou seest and wilt not know.

El. O thou sweet eye, glancing for me with love
Fourfold! To thee must needs be given the name
Of father: to thee falls the love I owe
To a mother—mine has merited utmost hate—
And to a sister, cruelly sacrificed.
Proved now a brother true, I reverence thee.
Only may Power and Justice, and with these
Zeus, mightiest of all, be on thy side.

τοὺς γῆς ἔνερθε δαίμονας κλύειν ἐμὰς
 εὐχάς, πατρώων δωμάτων ἐπισκόπους.
 καὶ γὰρ χέουσα τάσδε χέρνιβας βροτοῖς
 λέγω καλοῦσα πατέρ', 'ἐποίκειρόν τ' ἐμέ
 φίλον τ' Ὀρέστην φῶς ἀναψον ἐν δόμοις. 90
 αὐτῇ τέ μοι δὸς σωφρονεστέραν πολὺ
 μητρὸς γενέσθαι χεῖρά τ' εὖσεβεστέραν.
 ἡμῖν μὲν εὐχὰς τάσδε, τοῖς δ' ἐναντίοις
 λέγω φανῆναί σου, πάτερ, τιμάορον,
 καὶ τοὺς κτανόντας ἀντικαθθανεῖν δίκη. 95

- Ορ. εὐχου τὰ λοιπά, τοῖς θεοῖς τελεσφόρους
 εὐχὰς ἐπαγγέλλουσα, τυγχάνειν καλῶς.
 Ηλ. ἐπεὶ τί νῦν ἕκατι δαιμόνων κυρῶ;
 Ορ. εἰς ὄψιν ἦκεις ὧν περ ἐξηύχου πάλαι.
 Ηλ. καὶ τίνα σύ νοισθά μοι καλουμένη βροτῶν; 100
 Ορ. σύ νοιδ' Ὀρέστην πολλά σ' ἐκπαγλουμένην.
 Ηλ. καὶ πρὸς τί δῆτα τυγχάνω κατευγμάτων;
 Ορ. ὅδ' εἰμί· μὴ μάτευ' ἐμοῦ μᾶλλον φίλον.
 Ηλ. ἀλλ' ἢ δόλον τιν', ὦ ξέν', ἀμφί μοι πλέκεις;
 Ορ. αὐτὸς καθ' αὐτοῦ τᾶρα μηχανορραφῶ. 105
 Ηλ. ἀλλ' ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾶν θέλεις.
 Ορ. καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἄρ', εἴπερ ἐν γε τοῖσι σοῖς.
 Ηλ. ὡς ὄντ' Ὀρέστην τᾶρ' ἐγὼ σε προῦννέπω;
 Ορ. αὐτὸν μὲν οὖν ὁρώσα δυσμαθεῖς ἐμέ.
 Ηλ. ὦ τερπνὸν ὄμμα τέσσαρας μοίρας ἔχον 110
 ἐμοί· προσανδᾶν δ' ἔστ' ἀναγκαίως ἔχον
 πατέρα τε, καὶ τὸ μητρὸς ἐς σέ μοι ῥέπει
 στέργηθρον· ἡ δὲ πανδίκως ἐχθαίρεται·
 καὶ τῆς τυθείσης νηλεῶς ὁμοσπόρου·
 πιστὸς δ' ἀδελφὸς ἦσθ', ἐμοὶ σέβας φέρων· 115
 μόνον Κράτος τε καὶ Δίκη σὺν τῷ τρίτῳ
 πάντων μεγίστῳ Ζηνὶ συγγένοιτό σοι.

Or. Zeus, Zeus, look down; witness what here is done.

Behold this orphan brood of an eagle sire
That perished in the twines and writhing coils
Of a fell viper. Fatherless are they, gripped
By hungry want, for strength is not yet theirs
To bring home to the nest their father's prey.
Like them mayst thou behold me; and her too,
Electra, children fatherless and forlorn,
Both suffering the same exile from our home.

Ch. O children, saviours of the ancestral hearth,
Silence, I pray, lest someone overhear,
And to ease a babbling tongue report all this
To those that rule. Ah may I one day watch
Their corpses in the spluttering resinous flame!

Or. Never shall Loxias' mighty oracle
Betray us. He it was who bade me endure
This peril, threatening oft with voice uplifted
Woes to make cold as winter my warm heart,
If I avenged not those that slew my sire.
The wrath rising from earth of hostile powers
His voice proclaimed to men, citing such plagues
As leprous ulcers crawling o'er the flesh,
Eating its health away with cruel jaws:
And how upon this plague a white down grows.
Yet other onslaughts of the avenging fiends
Sprang from a father's blood, so he foretold:
For the unseen weapon of the nether powers,
Stirred by slain kinsmen calling for revenge,
Frenzy and causeless terror of the night,
Perturb and harass; till by the brazen scourge
His marred carcase is chased forth from the town.
At last without rites, without friends, he dies,

Ορ. Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, θεωρὸς τῶνδε πραγμάτων γενοῦ·
 ἰδοῦ δὲ γένναν εὖνιν αἰετοῦ πατρός,
 θανόντος ἐν πλεκταῖσι καὶ σπειράμασι 120
 δεινῆς ἐχίδνης. τοὺς δ' ἀπωρφανισμένους
 νῆστις πιέζει λιμός· οὐ γὰρ ἐντελεῖς
 θήραν πατρώαν προσφέρειν σκηνήμασιν.
 οὕτω δὲ καὶ μὲ τήνδε τ', Ἡλέκτραν λέγω,
 ἰδεῖν πάρεστί σοι, πατροστερηῇ γόνον, 125
 ἄμφω φυγὴν ἔχοντε τὴν αὐτὴν δόμων.

Χο. ὦ παῖδες, ὦ σωτήρες ἐστίας πατρός,
 σιγᾶθ', ὅπως μὴ πεύσεταιί τις, ὦ τέκνα,
 γλώσσης χάριν δὲ πάντ' ἀπαγγείλῃ τάδε
 πρὸς τοὺς κρατοῦντας· οὓς ἴδοιμ' ἐγὼ ποτε 130
 θανόντας ἐν κηκῖδι πισσῆρει φλογός.

Ορ. οὗτοι προδώσει Λοξίου μεγασθενῆς
 χρησμός κελεύων τόνδε κίνδυνον περᾶν,
 κάξορθιάζων πολλὰ καὶ δυσχειμέρους
 ἄτας ὑφ' ἥπαρ θερμὸν ἐξαυδόμενος, 135
 εἰ μὴ μέτειμι τοῦ πατρός τοὺς αἰτίους·
 τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ γῆς δυσφρόνων μηνίματα
 βροτοῖς πιφαύσκων εἶπε, τάσδ' αἰνῶν νόσους—
 σαρκῶν ἐπαμβατήρας ἀγρίαις γνάθοις
 λειχῆνας ἐξέσθοντας ἀρχαίαν φύσιν, 140
 λευκάς δὲ κόρσας τῇδ' ἐπαντέλλειν νόσῳ·
 ἄλλας τ' ἐφώνει προσβολὰς Ἐρινύων
 ἐκ τῶν πατρώων αἰμάτων τελουμένης·
 τὸ γὰρ σκοτεινὸν τῶν ἐνεργτέρων βέλος
 ἐκ προστροπαίων ἐν γένει πεπτωκότων, 145
 καὶ λύσσα καὶ μάταιος ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβος
 κινεῖ, ταρίσσει, καὶ διώκεσθαι πόλεως
 χαλκηλάτῳ πλάστιγγι λυμανθὲν δέμας,
 πάντων δ' ἄτιμον κᾶφίλον θνήσκειν χρόνον

Utterly wasted to a vile mummied corpse.

Should I not trust such oracles as these?

Though I trust them not, the deed must yet be done.

Ch. O powerful Fates, let Zeus now send
Prosperous fortune

Unto us whom righteousness aideth.

"Enmity of tongue for enmity of tongue

Be paid in requital," cries Justice aloud,

Exacting the debt that is owed her.

"Murderous blow for murderous blow

Let him take for his payment." "To the deed its

So speaks immemorial wisdom. [reward,"

Or. Father, O father of woe, what word

Am I to speak, or what do

To waft this message afar to thee,

Where in the grave thou couchest?

As darkness and light are sundered,

Loving rites cannot reach thee,

The dirge chanted of old to praise

Kings of the house of Atreus.

Ch. My son, the ravening jaw

Of fire subdues not wholly

The spirit of him who is dead.

Someday his mood he revealeth.

When the slain man is bewailed, then

Is the injurer discovered.

And a rightful lamentation

For a parent hunts and ranges

With wide search, till the guilt is tracked down.

El. Hear then, O father, as we in turn

Utter our tearful anguish.

κακῶς ταριχευθέντα παμφθάρτῳ μόρῳ. 150
 τοιοῖσδε χρησμοῖς ἄρα χρὴ πεποιθέναι;
 κεῖ μὴ πέποιθα, τοῦργον ἔστ' ἐργαστέον.

Χο. ἀλλ' ὦ μεγάλαι Μοῖραι, Διόθεν 155
 τῇδε τελευτᾶν,
 ἧ τὸ δίκαιον μεταβαίνει.
 'ἀντὶ μὲν ἐχθρᾶς γλώσσης ἐχθρὰ
 γλώσσα τελείσθω' τοῦφειλόμενον
 πράσσουσα Δίκη μέγ' ἀντεῖ·
 'ἀντὶ δὲ πληγῆς φονίᾶς φονίαν
 πληγὴν τινέτω.' 'δράσαντι παθεῖν,' 160
 τριγέρων μῦθος τάδε φωνεῖ.

Ορ. ὦ πάτερ αἰνοπαθές, τί σοι 165
 φάμενος ἢ τί ῥέξας
 τύχοιμ' ἄγκαθεν οὐρίσας,
 ἔνθα σ' ἔχουσιν εὐναί;
 σκότῳ φάος ἀντίμοι-
 ρον· χάριτες δ' ὁμοίως
 κέκληνται γόος εὐκλεῆς
 προσθοδόμοις Ἀτρείδαις.

Χο. τέκνον, φρόνημα τοῦ 170
 θανόντος οὐ δαμάζει
 πυρὸς μαλερὰ γνάθος,
 φαίνει δ' ὕστερον ὀργάς·
 ὁτοτύζεται δ' ὁ θνήσκων,
 ἀναφαίνεται δ' ὁ βλάπτων. 175
 πατέρων τε καὶ τεκόντων
 γόος ἔνδικος ματεύει
 τὸ πᾶν ἀμφιλαφῆς παραχθείς.

Ηλ. κλυθὶ νυν, ὦ πάτερ, ἐν μέρει 180
 πολυδάκρυτα πένθη.

Thy two children are we whose dirge
Wails for thee o'er thy grave-mound.
The suppliant and the exile
To thy tomb we draw near.
What here is well? What is free from woe?
Vain with our doom to wrestle.

Ch. I beat my breast to an Arian dirge, and in the mode
Of Kissian wailing-women slaves, [hands
With clutching and bespattering strokes behold my
In quick succession uplifted higher and higher still
To fall in battering blows, until my miserable
Belaboured head resounds beneath the cruel shock.

El. Oh fie on thee! Cruel fiend!
Thou wicked mother! Cruel was that funeral.
Without kinsfolk, him, a king,
Without lament, unbewailed,
Thou hadst the heart so to inter a husband.

Or. No rites at all! Was it so then? Oh shame!
Nay verily, for my father's shaming
By help of heaven she shall pay,
By help of these hands of mine.
And then, when I have slain her, let me perish.

Ch. This also know, his limbs were lopped and mangled.
'Twas her design, hers who so could bury him,
To make his death such that thou
Shouldst not endure still to live.
Thou now hast heard how thy sire was outraged.

Or. On thee I call; father, stand beside thine own.

El. And I to his, all in tears, would add my voice.

Ch. And we too all cry aloud with one accord:

δίπαις τοί σ' ἐπιτύμβιος

θρήνος ἀναστενάζει.

τάφος δ' ἰκέτας δέδεκται

φυγάδας θ' ὁμοίως.

τί τῶνδ' εὖ, τί δ' ἄτερ κακῶν;

185

οὐκ ἀτρίακτος ἄτα;

Χο. ἔκοψα κομμὸν Ἄριον ἐν τε Κισσίας

νόμοις ἡλεμιστρίας,

ἀπριγκτόπληκτα πολυπάλακτα δ' ἦν ἰδεῖν

ἐπασσυτεροτριβῇ τὰ χερὸς ὀρέγματα

190

ἄνωθεν ἀνέκαθεν, κτύπῳ δ' ἐπιρροθεῖ

κροτητὸν ἀμὸν πανάθλιον κάρα.

Ηλ. ἰὼ ἰὼ δαῖτα

πάντολμε μᾶτερ, δαΐαις ἐν ἐκφοραῖς

ἄνευ πολιτᾶν ἀνακτ',

195

ἄνευ δὲ πενθημάτων

ἔτλας ἀνοίμωκτον ἄνδρα θάψαι.

Ορ. ταφὰς ἀτίμους ἔλεξας, οἶμοι;

πατρὸς δ' ἀτίμωσιν ἄρα τίσει

ἕκατι μὲν δαιμόνων,

200

ἕκατι δ' ἀμᾶν χερῶν.

ἔπειτ' ἐγὼ νοσφίσας ὀλοίμαν.

Χο. ἐμασχαλίσθη δέ γ', ὥς τόδ' εἰδῆς,

ἔπρασσε δ' ἥπερ νιν ὧδε θάπτει,

μόρον κτίσαι μωμένα

205

ἄφερτον αἰῶνι σῶ.

κλύεις πατρώους δύας ἀτίμους.

Ορ. σέ τοι λέγω, ξυγγενοῦ, πάτερ, φίλοις.

Ηλ. ἐγὼ δ' ἐπιφθέγγομαι κεκλαυμένα.

Χο. στάσις δὲ πάγκοινος ἥδ' ἐπιρροθεῖ.

210

Or. El. Ch. Oh hearken; visit thou the light:
Aid us against our foes' hate.

Or. Let sword with sword, right encountering meet with
right.

El. Ye deities, judge the right with righteousness.

Ch. A shudder steals o'er me, as I hear such prayers.

Or. El. Ch. Though destiny hath bided long,
Yet shall your prayer reveal it.

Or. O father, who wast so unkingly slain,
Grant, I implore thee, lordship in thy house.

El. A like boon, father, do I ask of thee:
Let me escape, and let Aegisthus perish.

Or. O Earth, release my sire to guide me in fight.

El. O Persephassa, grant fair victory.

Or. Remember the bath wherewith they slew thee, father.

El. Remember what strange cloak-net they devised.

Or. In fetters no smith forged thou wast snared, father.

El. Yes, in a wrapping plotted for thy shame.

Or. Art thou not wakened by these tauntings, father?

El. Dost thou not lift up thy beloved head?

Or. Either send Justice to fight beside thine own,
Or grant us the like grip of them in turn,
If thou by victory wouldst retrieve defeat.

El. Hearken once more to this last cry, father.
Behold these nestlings crouching at thy tomb,
And pity us both, thy daughter and thy son.

Or. And blot not out this seed of Pelops' line:
For thus, though thou hast died, thou art not dead.

Ch. Come, amply have you lengthened out your dirge,
Due tribute to the tomb's unwept dishonour.
For the rest, since now thy heart is set on deeds,
Get thee to work forthwith, and test thy fortune.

Ορ. Ηλ. Χο. ἄκουσον ἐς φάος μολών,
ξὺν δὲ γενοῦ πρὸς ἐχθρούς.

Ορ. Ἄρης Ἄρει ξυμβαλεῖ, Δίκη Δίκα.

Ηλ. ἰὼ θεοί, κραίνειτ' ἐνδίκως δίκας.

Χο. τρόμος μ' ὑφέρπει κλύουσιν εὐγμάτων. 215

Ορ. Ηλ. Χο. τὸ μόρσιμον μένει πάλαι,
εὐχομένοις δ' ἂν ἔλθοι.

Ορ. πάτερ, τρόποισιν οὐ τυραννικοῖς θανών,
αἵτουμένῳ μοι δὸς κράτος τῶν σῶν δόμων.

Ηλ. καγὼ, πάτερ, τοιάνδε σου χρεῖαν ἔχω, 220
οἴκειν μετ' ἀνδρὸς θεῖσαν Αἰγίσθῳ μόρον.

Ορ. ὦ γαῖ', ἄνες μοι πατέρ' ἐποπτεῦσαι μάχην.

Ηλ. ὦ Περσέφασσα, δὸς δέ γ' εὐμορφον κράτος.

Ορ. μέμνησο λουτρῶν οἷς ἐνοσφίσθης, πάτερ.

Ηλ. μέμνησο δ' ἀμφίβληστρον ὥς ἐκαίνισας— 225

Ορ. πέδαις γ' ἀχαλκεύτοισι θηρευθεῖς, πάτερ,—

Ηλ. αἰσχροῦς τε βουλευτοῖσιν ἐν καλύμμασιν.

Ορ. ἄρ' ἐξεγείρει τοῖσδ' ὄνειδεσιν, πάτερ;

Ηλ. ἄρ' ὀρθὸν αἶρεις φίλτατον τὸ σὸν κύρα;

Ορ. ἦτοι δίκην ἴαλλε σύμμαχον φίλοις, 230

ἢ τὰς ὁμοίας ἀντίδος λαβὰς λαβεῖν,
εἶπερ κρατηθεῖς γ' ἀντινικῆσαι θέλεις.

Ηλ. καὶ τῆσδ' ἄκουσον λοισθίου βοῆς, πάτερ,
ἰδὼν νεοσσοὺς τούσδ' ἐφημένους τάφῳ·

οἴκτειρε θῆλυν ἄρσενός θ' ὁμοῦ γόον. 235

Ορ. καὶ μὴ ἔξαλείψῃς σπέρμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε.
οὕτω γὰρ οὐ τέθνηκας οὐδέ περ θανών.

Χο. καὶ μὴν ἀμεμφῇ τόνδ' ἐτεινάτην λόγον,
τίμημα τύμβου τῆς ἀνοιμώκτου τύχης.

τὰ δ' ἄλλ', ἐπειδὴ ὄρᾱν κατώρθωσαι φρενί, 240
ἔρδοις ἂν ἤδη δαίμονος πειρώμενος.

Or. That will I. Yet first it were well to enquire,
Wherefore she sent libations; what could move her
So late to make amends for wrongs past cure?

Ch. I know, my son; for I was there. By dreams
And prowling terrors of the night perturbed,
The godless woman sent these offerings.

Or. And did you learn the dream? Then tell it me.

Ch. She gave birth in her dream to a snake, she says,
And couched it like a babe in swaddling bands.

Or. For what food did it crave, this new-born monster?

Ch. She offered it her own breast in her dream,
And with the milk it sucked a curd of blood.
Then she awoke from sleep shrieking for terror;
And many a lamp, whose light the dark had blinded,
Flared up throughout the house at the queen's need.
Therefore these pious offerings she sends,
In hope to lance and cure the mischief so.

Or. Now to this earth and to my father's grave
I pray that in me this dream may be fulfilled.
She who thus nursed so dread a prodigy
Must die by force, and I, enserpented,
Shall be her slayer, as this dream foretells.

Ch. I accept thy divination of these signs.
So may it prove. Teach now thy friends their part,
Telling what each should do or should not do.

Or. 'Tis simple. Let Electra go within.
These women I bid keep concealed my plan.
Then as by craft they slew a noble prince,
By craft they shall be caught in the same noose,
And perish, even as Loxias foretold.
For like a traveller, and in full disguise,
To the main gate will I come with Pylades here,

- Ορ. ἔσται· πυθέσθαι δ' οὐδέν ἐστ' ἔξω δρόμου,
 πόθεν χοὰς ἔπεμψεν, ἐκ τίνος λόγου
 μεθύστερον τιμῶσ' ἀνήκεστον πάθος;
- Χο. οἶδ', ὦ τέκνον, παρῇ γάρ· ἔκ τ' ὀνειράτων 245
 καὶ νυκτιπλάγκτων δειμάτων πεπαλμένη
 χοὰς ἔπεμψε τάσδε δύσθεος γυνή.
- Ορ. ἦ καὶ πέπυσθε τοῦναρ, ὥστ' ὀρθῶς φράσαι;
- Χο. τεκεῖν δράκοντ' ἔδοξεν, ὡς αὐτὴ λέγει.
 καὶ σπαργάνοισι παιδὸς ὀρμίσαι δίκην. 250
- Ορ. τίνος βορᾶς χρήζοντα, νεογενὲς δάκος;
- Χο. αὐτὴ προσέσχε μαζὸν ἐν τῶνείρατι
 ὥστ' ἐν γάλακτι θρόμβον αἵματος σπάσαι.
 ἦ δ' ἐξ ὕπνου κέκραγεν ἐπτοημένη.
 πολλοὶ δ' ἀνῆθον, ἐκτυφλωθέντες σκότῳ, 255
 λαμπτήρες ἐν δόμοισι δεσποίνης χάριν·
 πέμπει τ' ἔπειτα τάσδε κηδεῖους χοάς,
 ἄκος τομαῖον ἐλπίσασα πημάτων.
- Ορ. ἀλλ' εὐχομαι γῇ τῇδε καὶ πατρὸς τάφῳ
 τοῦναιρον εἶναι τοῦτ' ἐμοὶ τελεσφόρον. 260
 δεῖ τοί νιν, ὡς ἔθρεψεν ἑκπαγλον τέρας,
 θανεῖν βιαίως· ἐκδρακοντωθεὶς δ' ἐγὼ
 κτείνω νιν, ὡς τοῦναιρον ἐννέπει τόδε.
- Χο. τερασκόπον δὴ τῶνδέ σ' αἰροῦμαι πέρι.
 γένοιτο δ' οὕτως. τᾶλλα δ' ἐξηγοῦ φίλοις, 265
 τοὺς μὲν τι ποιεῖν, τοὺς δὲ μὴ τι δρᾶν λέγω.
- Ορ. ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος· τήνδε μὲν στείχειν ἔσω,
 αἰνῶ δὲ κρύπτειν τάσδε συνθήκας ἐμᾶς,
 ὡς ἂν δόλῳ κτείναντες ἄνδρα τίμιον
 δόλοισι καὶ ληφθῶσιν ἐν ταύτῳ βρόχῳ 270
 θανόντες, ἦ καὶ Λοξίας ἐφήμισεν.
 ξένῳ γὰρ εἰκώς, παντέλῃ σαγῆν ἔχων,
 ἦξω σὺν ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἐφ' ἐρκείους πύλας

A guest to the house, aye and its spear-guest too.
 And both of us will don Parnassian speech,
 Copying the accent of a Phocian tongue.
 Then once I have crossed the threshold of the court,
 And found *him* seated in my father's throne,
 Or if afterwards he meet me face to face
 And speak—dropping his craven eyes, be sure—
 Ere he can say, “Whence comes this stranger?” dead,
 Snared by my nimble weapon, will I smite him.
 The Avenging Spirit, stinted ne’er of slaughter,
 Shall drink in blood unmixed her third last draught.
 Do thou then keep good watch within the house.
 And you, I charge you, bear a cautious tongue
 For speech or silence as the moment needs.
 Last thou, friend, follow me and stand at watch
 To succour me in the contest of the sword.
 Ho, slave! open the gates! You hear me knock.
 Is any there within doors?—Ho, slave, ho!

GATE-KEEPER

Enough! I hear. Of what land are you? Whence?
Or. Announce me to the masters of the house.
 The tidings I come bringing are for them.
 And make haste; for night's dusky chariot
 Comes on apace. 'Tis time we travellers found
 Some public guest-house to cast anchor in.

CLYTAEMNESTRA

Friends, speak your wishes. At your service here
 Are all such comforts as beseem this house,
 Warm baths, and to refresh your weariness,
 Soft couches, and true eyes to attend your wants.
 But if you have affairs of weightier counsel,
 That is work for men, to whom we will impart it.

Πυλάδῃ· ξένος δὲ καὶ δορύξενος δόμων·
 ἄμφω δὲ φωνὴν ἤσομεν Παριησίδα, 275
 γλώσσης αὐτὴν Φωκίδος μιμουμένω.
 εἰ δ' οὖν ἀμείψω βαλὸν ἐρκείων πυλῶν
 κακείνων ἐν θρόνοισιν εὐρήσω πατρός,
 ἧ καὶ μολὼν ἔπειτά μοι κατὰ στόμα
 ἐρεῖ, σάφ' ἴσθι, καὶ κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς βαλεῖ, 280
 πρὶν αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν 'ποδαπὸς ὁ ξένος;' νεκρὸν
 θήσω, ποδώκει περιβαλὼν χαλκεύματι.
 φόβου δ' Ἐρινὺς οὐχ ὑπεσπανισμένη
 ἄκρατον αἶμα πίεται τρίτην πόσιν.
 νῦν οὖν σὺ μὲν φύλασσε τῶν οἴκῳ καλῶς, 285
 ὑμῖν δ' ἐπαινῶ γλῶσσαν εὐφημον φέρειν,
 σιγᾶν θ' ὅπου δεῖ καὶ λέγειν τὰ καίρια.
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα τούτῳ δεῦρ' ἐποπτεῦσαι λέγω,
 ξιφηφόρους ἀγῶνας ὀρθώσαντί μοι.
 παῖ παῖ, θύρας ἄκουσον ἐρκείας κτύπον. 290
 τίς ἔνδον, ὦ παῖ—παῖ, μάλ' αὖ, τίς ἐν δόμοις;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

εἶεν, ἀκουω· ποδαπὸς ὁ ξένος; πόθεν;
 Ορ. ἀγγέλλε τοῖσι κυρίοισι δωμάτων,
 πρὸς οὓσπερ ἦκω καὶ φέρω καινοὺς λόγους.
 τάχυνε δ', ὥς καὶ νυκτὸς ἄρμ' ἐπείγεται 295
 σκοτεινόν, ὥρα δ' ἐμπόρους καθιέναι
 ἄγκυραν ἐν δόμοισι πανδόκοις ξένων.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

ξένοι, λέγοιτ' ἂν εἴ τι δεῖ· πάρεστι γὰρ
 ὁποῖάπερ δόμοισι τοῖσδ' ἐπείκότα,
 καὶ θερμὰ λουτρά καὶ πόνων θελκτιήριος 300
 στρωμνὴ, δικαίων τ' ὁμμάτων παρουσία.
 εἰ δ' ἄλλο πρᾶξαι δεῖ τι βουλευώτερον,
 ἀνδρῶν τόδ' ἐστὶν ἔργον, οἷς κοινώσομεν.

Or. I am a Daulian traveller from Phocis.

As at my own risk I was carrying goods
To Argos, where now my long journey ends,
There met me a man I knew not, nor he me,
Strophius, a Phoecean, so I learnt in talk.
Having asked my way and told me his, he said:
"Since anyhow you are bound for Argos, Sir,
Bear heedfully in mind to tell his parents
That Orestes is dead. Do not forget.
So whether his friends resolve to fetch him home,
Or bury him, our denizen and guest
Forever, bring me their injunctions back.
Meanwhile the curved sides of a brazen urn
Enclose his ashes, in due form bewept."
I have told my whole message. Whether now
I am speaking to the rulers, and his kindred,
I know not; but his parent should be told.

Cl. Ah me! we are taken ruthlessly by storm.

O thou all-conquering curse that haunts this house,
How wide thy vision! with sure aim thy shafts
Strike even that we have hidden with care afar,
Stripping my dear ones from me, unhappy woman!

Or. For my part certainly I could have wished
With happier tidings to commend myself
To hosts so princely, and earn their entertainment.

Cl. Nay, due reward shall none the less be thine,
Nor shall you find yourself less welcome here.
Some other would have brought this news instead.
But now 'tis the hour when guests, tired by the day's
Long journey, should be tended as befits.
Take him and lodge him well in the men's chambers
With these his fellow-travellers and attendants.

- Ορ. ξένος μὲν εἰμι Δαυλιεὺς ἐκ Φωκέων·
 στείχοντα δ' αὐτόφορτον οἰκεία σαγῇ 305
 εἰς Ἄργος, ὥσπερ δεῦρ' ἀπεξύγην πόδα,
 ἀγνώως πρὸς ἀγνώτ' εἶπε συμβαλὼν ἀνὴρ,
 ἐξιστορήσας καὶ σαφηνίσας ὁδόν,
 Στρόφιος ὁ Φωκεύς· πεύθομαι γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ·
 'ἐπείπερ ἄλλως, ὦ ξέν', εἰς Ἄργος κίεις, 310
 πρὸς τοὺς τεκόντας πανδίκως μεμνημένος
 τεθνεώτ' Ὀρέστην εἰπέ, μηδαμῶς λάθῃ.
 εἴτ' οὖν κομίζειν δόξα νικήσει φίλων,
 εἴτ' οὖν μέτοικον, εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἀεὶ ξένον,
 θάπτειν, ἐφეტμὰς τάσδε πόρθμευσον πάλιν. 315
 νῦν γὰρ λέβητος χαλκείου πλευρώματα
 σποδὸν κέκευθεν ἀνδρὸς εὖ κεκλαυμένου·
 τοσαῦτ' ἀκούσας εἶπον. εἰ δὲ τυγχάνω
 τοῖς κυρίοισι καὶ προσήκουσιν λέγων
 οὐκ οἶδα, τὸν τεκόντα δ' εἰκὸς εἰδέναι. 320
- Κλ. οἱ ἔγω, κατ' ἄκρας νηλεῶς πορθοῦμεθα.
 ὦ δυσπάλαιστε τῶνδε δωμάτων ἀρά,
 ὡς πόλλ' ἐπωπῆς κᾶκποδὼν εὖ κείμενα,
 τόξοις πρόσωθεν εὐσκόποις χειρουμένη,
 φίλων ἀποψιλοῖς με τὴν παναθλίαν. 325
- Ορ. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ξένοισιν ὧδ' εὐδαίμοσι
 κεδνῶν ἕκατι πραγμάτων ἂν ἤθελον
 γνωστὸς γενέσθαι καὶ ξενωθῆναι· τί γάρ;
- Κλ. οὗτοι κυρήσεις μείον ἀξίων σέθεν,
 οὐδ' ἦσσον ἂν γένοιο δώμασιν φίλος. 330
 ἄλλος δ' ὁμοίως ἦλθεν ἂν τάδ' ἀγγελῶν.
 ἀλλ' ἔσθ' ὁ καιρὸς ἡμερεύοντας ξένους
 μακρᾶς κελεύθου τυγχάνειν τὰ πρόσφορα.
 ἄγ' αὐτὸν εἰς ἀνδρῶνας εὐξένους δόμῳ,
 ὅπισθόπους τε τοῦσδε καὶ ξυνεμπόρους· 335

Let them receive there what beseems our house.
I warn you, for their comfort you must answer.
This news meanwhile we will impart to those
Who bear rule here. Having no lack of friends,
We will take counsel on this sad event.

Ch. O reverend Earth, O reverend mound,
Thou that beneath thee coverest the outworn
Dust of the armed fleet's kingly commander,
Deign now to hearken, deign to give succour.
Now is the hour when guileful Deceit
Must enter to aid us, and Chthonian Hermes,
Patron of stealth, stand sentinel over
This deadly encounter of sword-blades.

Our traveller, it seems, is working mischief.
Yonder I see Orestes' nurse in tears.
Where are you going, Kilissa, through the gates,
With grief to bear you company unhired?

NURSE

The mistress bids me summon Aegisthus home
As quick as may be, to meet these stranger guests,
And learn more certainly as man from man
This new-told rumour—while before her servants
Behind eyes of pretended gloom she hides
A laugh at work done excellently well
For her, but miserably for this house,
Hearing the tale these strangers told so plain.
That heart of his I warrant will be glad
When he has learnt their story. Wellaway!
All other troubles patiently I bore:
But dear Orestes, the babe I spent my soul on,

κα̐κεῖ κυρούντων δώμασιν τὰ πρόσφορα.
 αἰνῶ δὲ πρίσσειν ὥς ὑπευθύνω τάδε.
 ἡμεῖς δὲ ταῦτα τοῖς κρατοῦσι δωμάτων
 κοινώσομέν τε κοῦ σπανίζοντες φίλων
 βουλευσόμεσθα τῇσδε συμφορᾷς πέρι. 340

Χο. ὦ πότνια χθὼν καὶ πότνι' ἀκτῇ
 χώματος, ἣ νῦν ἐπὶ ναυάρχῳ
 σώματι κεῖσαι τῷ βασιλείῳ,
 νῦν ἐπάκουσον, νῦν ἐπάρηξον·
 νῦν γὰρ ἀκμάζει Πειθῶ δολίαν 345
 ξυγκαταβῆναι, χθόνιον δ' Ἑρμῆν
 καὶ τὸν νύχιον τοῖσδ' ἐφορεῦσαι
 ξιφοδηλήτοισιν ἀγῶσιν.

ἔοικεν ἀνὴρ ὁ ξένος τεύχειν κακόν·
 τροφὸν δ' Ὀρέστου τήνδ' ὁρῶ κεκλαυμένην. 350
 ποῖ δὴ πατεῖς, Κίλισσα, δωμάτων πύλας;
 λύπη δ' ἄμισθός ἐστί σοι ξυνέμπορος.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

Αἴγισθον ἢ κρατοῦσα τοῖς ξένοις καλεῖν
 ὅπως τάχιστ' ἄνωγεν, ὥς σαφέστερον
 ἀνὴρ ἀπ' ἀνδρὸς τὴν νεάγγελτον φάτιν 355
 ἐλθὼν πύθηται τήνδε, πρὸς μὲν οἰκέτας
 θετοσκυθρωπῶν ἐντὸς ὀμμάτων γέλων
 κεύθουσ' ἐπ' ἔργοις διαπεπραγμένοις καλῶς
 κείνη, δόμοις δὲ τοῖσδε παγκάκως ἔχει,
 φήμης ὑφ' ἧς ἡγγειλαν οἱ ξένοι τορῶς. 360
 ἣ δὲ κλύων ἐκείνος εὐφρανεῖ νόον,
 εὖτ' ἂν πίθηται μῦθον. ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγώ·
 τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τλημόνως ἦντλουν κακά·
 φίλον δ' Ὀρέστην, τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς τριβὴν,

Whom straight from his mother's womb I took to nurse....

And then those shrill cries summoning me by night,
And all those weary tasks, mere trouble wasted
They were: for a senseless thing one needs must nurse
Like a dumb beast—how else—? by humouring it.
The cry of a boy in swaddlings tells you nothing,
Whether hunger, thirst or wanting to make water
Grips him: a child's young body will have its way.
These wants I would forecast; but often, it may be,
Would guess wrong, and so have to cleanse his linen,
Laundress and nurse reckoning as one office.

Aye, these two handicrafts both fell to me,
When I received Orestes from his father.
Now, woe is me! I learn that he is dead.
So I must fetch the man who has brought this house
To ruin. Glad will he be to hear my tale.

Ch. Tell us, how does she bid him come arrayed?

Nu. "Arrayed?" Speak plain. I understand you not.

Ch. Whether with escort, or may be alone?

Nu. She bids him bring a bodyguard of spearmen.

Ch. Bear no such message then to our hated master,
But bid him come alone, that he may hear
Without alarm, at once, with cheerful heart.

Nu. Can you be looking kindly on these tidings?

Ch. But what if Zeus should change ill winds to fair?

Nu. How, when Orestes, hope of the house, is gone?

Ch. Not yet. A seer of small skill might know that.

Nu. What! Know you aught outside what has been told?

Ch. Go, take thy message. Do as thou wert charged.
That which concerns the Gods is their concern.

Nu. Well, I will go, following thy advice.

May it prove all for the best by the Gods' grace.

- ὄν ἐξέθρεψα μητρόθεν δεδεγμένη,— 365
 καὶ κυκτιπλάγκτων ὀρθίων κελευμάτων
 καὶ πολλὰ καὶ μοχθήρ' ἀνωφέλητ' ἐμοὶ
 τλάσῃ.—τὸ μὴ φρονοῦν γὰρ ὥσπερ εἰ βοτὸν
 τρέφειν ἀνάγκη, πῶς γὰρ οὐ; τρόπῳ φρενός·
 οὐ γάρ τι φωνεῖ παῖς ἔτ' ὢν ἐν σπαργάνοις, 370
 ἢ λιμός, ἢ δίψ' εἴ τις, ἢ λιψουρία
 ἔχει· νέα δὲ νηδὺς αὐτάρκης τέκνων.
 τούτων πρόμαντις οὔσα, πολλὰ δ', οἶομαι,
 ψευσθείσα, παιδὸς σπαργάνων φαιδρύντρια,
 κναφεὺς τροφεὺς τε ταῦτόν εἰχέτην τέλος. 375
 ἐγὼ διπλᾶς δὲ τάσδε χειρωναξίας
 ἔχουσ' Ὀρέστην ἐξεδεξάμην πατρί·
 τεθνηκότος δὲ νῦν τάλαινα πεύθομαι.
 στείχω δ' ἐπ' ἄνδρα τῶνδε λυμαντήριον
 οἴκων, θέλων δὲ τόνδε πεύσεται λόγον. 380
- Χο. πῶς οὖν κелеύει νιν μολεῖν ἐσταλμένον;
 Τρ. τί πῶς; λέγ' αὖθις, ὥς μάθω σαφέστερον.
 Χο. εἰ ξὺν λοχίταις εἴτε καὶ μονοστιβῇ.
 Τρ. ἄγειν κелеύει δορυφόρους ὁπάοντας.
 Χο. μή νυν σὺ ταῦτ' ἄγγελλε δεσπότης στύγαι· 385
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐλθεῖν, ὥς ἀδειμάντως κλύῃ,
 ἄνωχθ' ὅσον τάχιστα γηθούσῃ φρενί.
- Τρ. ἀλλ' ἢ φρονεῖς εὖ τοῖσι νῦν ἡγγελμένοις;
 Χο. ἀλλ' εἰ τροπαίαν Ζεὺς κακῶν θήσει ποτέ. 390
 Τρ. καὶ πῶς; Ὀρέστης ἐλπὶς οἴχεται δόμων.
 Χο. οὐπω· κακός γε μάντις ἂν γινοίῃ τάδε.
 Τρ. τί φῆς; ἔχεις τι τῶν λελεγμένων δίχα;
 Χο. ἄγγελλ' ἰοῦσα, πρᾶσσε τὰπεσταλμένα.
 μέλει θεοῖσιν ὦνπερ ἂν μέλῃ πέρι. 395
- Τρ. ἀλλ' εἰμι καὶ σοῖς ταῦτα πείσομαι λόγοις.
 γένοιτο δ' ὥς ἄριστα σὺν θεῶν δόσει.

Ch. O reverend Earth, O reverend mound,
 Thou that beneath thee coverest the outworn
 Dust of the armed fleet's kingly commander,
 Deign now to hearken, deign to give succour.
 Now is the hour when guileful Deceit
 Must enter to aid us, and Chthonian Hermes,
 Patron of stealth, stand sentinel over
 This deadly encounter of sword-blades.

AEGISTHUS

I am come in answer to a summoning message.
 A strange tale has been brought, so I am told,
 By travellers, news of no pleasant sort.
 Orestes' death—a horror-dripping burden
 Would that prove, were it too laid on this house
 Already mauled and festering with past bloodshed.
 What should I think? Is it the living truth?
 Or else mere talk, begotten of women's fears,
 That leaps into the air to die in smoke?
 Can you say aught to clear my mind of doubt?

Ch. We heard indeed—But go in to the strangers,
 And ask of them. No messenger so sure
 As to enquire oneself of him who knows.

Ae. This messenger I must see and question further,
 Whether he was present at the death himself,
 Or from some phantom rumour learnt his tale.
 Be sure they shall not cheat a clear-eyed mind.

Ch. Zeus, Zeus, what speech shall I find? Whence now
 Shall begin my fervent prayer to thy Godhead?
 How in loyal zeal
 Give utterance due to my longing?
 For now is the hour when either the blood-stained

Χο. ὦ πότνια χθῶν καὶ πότνι' ἀκτὴ
 χώματος, ἣ νῦν ἐπὶ ναυάρχῳ
 σώματι κεῖσαι τῷ βασιλείῳ, 400
 νῦν ἐπάκουσον, νῦν ἐπάρηξον·
 νῦν γὰρ ἀκμάζει Πειθῶ δολίαν
 ξυγκαταβῆναι, χθόνιον δ' Ἑρμῆν
 καὶ τὸν νύχιον τοῖσδ' ἐφορεῦσαι
 ξιφοδηλήτοισιν ἀγῶσιν. 405

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἦκω μὲν οὐκ ἄκλητος, ἀλλ' ὑπάγγελος·
 νέαν φάτιν δὲ πεύθομαι λέγειν τινὰς
 ξένους μολόντας οὐδαμῶς ἐφίμερον,
 μύρον δ' Ὀρέστου. καὶ τόδ' ἀμφέρειν δόμοις
 γένοιτ' ἂν ἄχθος αἵματοσταγὲς φόνῳ 410
 τῷ πρόσθεν ἐλκαίνουσι καὶ δεδηγμένοις.
 πῶς ταῦτ' ἀληθῆ καὶ βλέποντα δοξάσω;
 ἣ πρὸς γυναικῶν δειματούμενοι λόγοι
 πεδιάρσιοι θρώσκουσι, θνήσκοντος μάτην;
 τί τῶνδ' ἂν εἴποις ὥστε δηλῶσαι φρενί; 415

Χο. ἠκούσαμεν μὲν, πυνθάνου δὲ τῶν ξένων
 εἴσω παρελθών. οὐδὲν ἀγγέλων σθένος
 ὥς αὐτόσ' αὐτὸν ἄνδρα πεύθεσθαι πέρι.

Αἰ. ἰδεῖν ἐλέγξαι τ' αὖ θέλω τὸν ἄγγελον,
 εἴτ' αὐτὸς ἦν θνήσκοντος ἐγγύθεν παρών, 420
 εἴτ' ἐξ ἀμαυρᾶς κληδόνος λέγει μαθών.
 οὔτοι φρέν' ἂν κλέψειεν ὤμματωμένην.

Χο. Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, τί λέγω, πόθεν ἄρξωμαι
 τάδ' ἐπευχομένη καπιθεάζουσ',
 ὑπὸ δ' εὐνοίας 425
 πῶς ἴσον εἰποῦσ' ἀνύσωμαι;
 νῦν γὰρ μέλλουσι μιανθεῖσαι

Edges of cleaving man-slaying sword-blades
 Must utterly whelm in destruction the house
 Of great Agamemnon for all time;
 Or else he, kindling a fire and a light
 For the cause of freedom and lawful rule,
 Shall win the great wealth of his fathers.
 Such now is the prize for which, one against two,
 Our heaven-guided champion Orestes
 Must wrestle. Oh yet may he conquer.

Ae. (within). Eh! Eh! Otototoi!

Ch. Ah! What is it?

How is it now? How doth Fate crown the event?
 Stand we aside while the issue is in doubt,
 That so we may seem blameless of these woes.
 For 'tis by the sword the verdict must be sealed.

SERVANT

Woe is me! Utter woe! My lord is slain.
 Woe yet once more, a third last farewell cry!
 Aegisthus is no more. But open, open,
 And with all speed. Unbar the women's gates.
 Draw the bolts. And right lusty hands are needed—
 Though not to help the dead—what use were that?
 Ioû! Ioû!

I am shouting to the deaf and wasting words
 On idle sleepers. Where is Clytaemnestra?
 What doth she? Her own neck is like to fall
 Beside the block beneath the stroke of Justice.

Cl. What is it now? What clamour are you raising?

Ser. The dead, I tell you, are murdering the living.

Cl. Ay me! I read the purport of your riddle.

Even as by craft we slew, so must we perish.

Haste, someone, give me a man-destroying axe.

πειραὶ κοπάνων ἀνδροδαΐκτων
 ἧ πάνυ θήσειν Ἀγαμεμνονίων
 οἴκων ὄλεθρον διὰ παντός, 430
 ἧ πῦρ καὶ φῶς ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ
 δαίων ἀρχάς τε πολισσονόμους
 πατέρων θ' ἔξει μέγαν ὄλβον.
 τοιάνδε πάλην μόνος ὦν ἔφεδρος
 δισσοῖς μέλλει θεῖος Ὀρέστης 435
 ἄψειν. εἴη δ' ἐπὶ νίκη.

Αἰ. ἐή, ὀτοτοτοῖ.

Χο. ἔα ἔα μάλα·

πῶς ἔχει; πῶς κέκρानται δόμοις;
 ἀποσταθῶμεν πράγματος τελουμένου, 440
 ὅπως δοκῶμεν τῶνδ' ἀναίτιαι κακῶν
 εἶναι· μάχης γὰρ δὴ κεκύρωται τέλος.

ΟΙΚΕΤΣ

οἶμοι, πανοίμοι δεσπότης πεπληγμένου·
 οἶμοι μάλ' αὖθις ἐν τρίτοις προσφθέγμασιν.
 Αἴγισθος οὐκέτ' ἔστιν. ἀλλ' ἀνοίξατε 445
 ὅπως τάχιστα, καὶ γυναικείους πύλας
 μοχλοῖς χαλᾶτε· καὶ μάλ' ἡβώντος δὲ δεῖ,
 οὐχ ὥστ' ἀρῆξαι διαπεπραγμένῳ· τί γάρ;
 ἰοὺ ἰοῦ.

κωφοῖς αὐτῷ καὶ καθεύδουσιν μάτην 450
 ἄκραντα βάζω. ποῖ Κλυταιμῆστρα; τί δρᾷ;
 ἔοικε νῦν αὐτῆς ἐπιξήνου πέλας
 αὐχὴν πεσεῖσθαι πρὸς δίκην πεπληγμένος.

Κλ. τί δ' ἐστὶ χρῆμα; τίνα βοήν ἴστης δόμοις;

Οἰ. τὸν ζῶντα καίνειν τοὺς τεθνηκότας λέγω. 455

Κλ. οἱ γὰρ. ξυνῆκα τοῦπος ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων.

δόλοισι δολούμεθ', ὥσπερ οὖν ἐκτεínaμεν.

δοίη τις ἀνδροκμήτα πέλεκυν ὡς τάχος·

Let us know if we are conquerors or conquered.
To such a pass this woeful way has brought me.

Or. 'Tis thee I seek. For him, it is enough.

Cl. Ah me, beloved Aegisthus! Art thou dead?

Or. Thou lovest the man? Why then in the same grave
Shalt thou lie, ne'er to abandon him in death.

Cl. Forbear, my son. Reverence this, dear child,
This breast at which thou oft, slumbering the while,
Didst suck with toothless gums the fostering milk.

Or. How, Pylades? Should awe make me spare my
mother?

PYLADES

Who then will heed henceforth the voice of Loxias,
His Pythian oracles, aye and the faith of oaths?
Rather hold all men enemies than the Gods.

Or. I approve thy sentence. Well dost thou exhort me.
Come now. I mean to slay you at yon man's side.
In his life you deemed him better than my sire;
Sleep with him then in death; since he is the man
You love, and him you should have loved, you hate.

Cl. I reared thee, and with thee would I grow old.

Or. My father's murderess, wouldst thou share my home?

Cl. Nay, child, the blame in part must lie with Fate.

Or. Then this doom also Fate has brought to pass.

Cl. Hast thou no awe, child, of a parent's curse?

Or. A mother's, who could cast me forth to misery.

Cl. To a friendly house! That was no casting forth.

Or. Foully was I sold, I, son of a free sire.

Cl. Where is the price then I received for thee?

Or. That taunt for shame I cannot plainly utter.

Cl. Nay, but speak likewise of thy father's follies.

εἰδῶμεν εἰ νικῶμεν, ἢ νικώμεθα.

ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ τοῦδ' ἀφικόμην κακοῦ. 460

Ορ. σὲ καὶ ματεύω· τῷδε δ' ἀρκούντως ἔχει.

Κλ. οἱ ἄγῳ. τέθνηκας, φίλτατ' Αἰγίσθου βία.

Ορ. φιλεῖς τὸν ἄνδρα; τοιγὰρ ἐν ταύτῳ τάφῳ
κείσει. θανόντα δ' οὔτι μὴ προδῶς ποτε.

Κλ. ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ' αἶδεσαι, τέκνον, 465
μαστόν, πρὸς ᾧ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἵμα
οὔλοισιν ἐξήμελξας εὐτραφὲς γάλα.

Ορ. Πυλάδῃ, τί δράσω; μητέρ' αἶδεσθῶ κτανεῖν;

ΠΥΛΑΔΗΣ

ποῦ δὴ τὰ λοιπὰ Λοξίου μαντεύματα
τὰ πυθόχρηστα, πιστά τ' εὐορκώματα; 470
ἅπαντας ἐχθροὺς τῶν θεῶν ἡγοῦ πλέον.

Ορ. κρίνω σὲ νικᾶν, καὶ παραινεῖς μοι καλῶς.
ἔπον, πρὸς αὐτὸν τόνδε σὲ σφάξαι θέλω.
καὶ ζῶντα γὰρ νιν κρεῖσσον' ἡγήσω πατρός·
τούτῳ θανοῦσα ξυγκάθευδ', ἐπεὶ φιλεῖς 475
τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον, ὃν δ' ἐχρῆν φιλεῖν στυγεῖς.

Κλ. ἐγὼ σ' ἔθρεψα, σὺν δὲ γηράναι θέλω.

Ορ. πατροκτονοῦσα γὰρ ξυνοικήσεις ἐμοί;

Κλ. ἡ Μοῖρα τούτων, ὦ τέκνον, παραίτια.

Ορ. καὶ τόνδε τοίνυν Μοῖρ' ἐπόρσυνεν μόρον. 480

Κλ. οὐδὲν σεβίζει γενεθλίους ἀράς, τέκνον;

Ορ. τεκοῦσα γὰρ μ' ἔρριψας ἐς τὸ δυστυχές.

Κλ. οὔτοι σ' ἀπέρριψ' ἐς δόμους δορυξένους.

Ορ. αἰσχρῶς ἐπράθην ὧν ἐλευθέρου πατρός.

Κλ. ποῦ δὴθ' ὁ τῆμος, ὅντιν' ἀντεδεξάμην; 485

Ορ. αἰσχύνομαί σοι τοῦτ' ὀνειδίσαι σαφῶς.

Κλ. ἀλλ' εἴφ' ὁμοίως καὶ πατρός τοῦ σοῦ μάτας.

Or. Idling at home, censure not him who toils.

Cl. 'Tis grief for a woman, child, to lack a mate.

Or. Yet man's labour maintains her in idleness.

Cl. Thou meanest then, my child, to slay thy mother.

Or. 'Tis thou wilt be thine own slayer, not I.

Cl. Look to it! Beware the hounds of a mother's fury.

Or. How escape my father's, if I shirk this task?

Cl. Words then are vain as a dirge to a dead tomb.

Or. Vain, for my sire's fate brings his doom upon thee.

Cl. Aye me! This is the snake I bare and suckled.

Or. Yes, a true prophet was that dream-born terror.

You slew whom you ought not: suffer what you
should not.

Ch. As upon Priam's sons punishment came at last,

Heavily fraught with doom,

So to the royal house of Agamemnon came

A twofold lion, a twofold sword;

Yea to the utmost end

The Pytho-crowned fugitive,

Sped by the voice divine, his race now has run.

Utter a cry of joy, now that our master's house

Thus hath escaped its woes, yea and the waste of

By an unclean and guilty pair— [wealth

A hard, weary road!

Now upon him who loved treacherous fight, is come
Cunningly plotted doom.

And in the strife 'twas she guided aright his hand,

The veritable child of Zeus:

Justice the name whereby

She is called by men truthfully.

Deadly the wrath she breathes against those she hates.

- Ορ. μὴ ἄλεγχῃ τὸν ποιοῦντ' ἔσω καθήμενῃ.
 Κλ. ἄλγος γυναιξὶν ἀνδρὸς εἶργεσθαι, τέκνον.
 Ορ. τρέφει δέ γ' ἀνδρὸς μόχθος ἡμένας ἔσω. 490
 Κλ. κτενεῖν ἔοικας, ὦ τέκνον, τὴν μητέρα.
 Ορ. σύ τοι σεαυτήν, οὐκ ἐγώ, κατακτενεῖς.
 Κλ. ὄρα, φύλαξαι μητρὸς ἐγκότους κύνας.
 Ορ. τὰς τοῦ πατρὸς δὲ πῶς φύγω, παρεῖς τάδε ;
 Κλ. ἔοικα θρηνεῖν ζῶσα πρὸς τύμβον μάτην. 495
 Ορ. πατρὸς γὰρ αἶσα τόνδε σφῆρίζει μόρον.
 Κλ. οἱ ἄγε τεκοῦσα τόνδ' ὄφιν ἐθρεψάμην.
 Ορ. ἢ κάρτα μάντις οὐξ ὄνειράτων φόβος.
 ἔκανες ὃν οὐ χρεῖν, καὶ τὸ μὴ χρεὼν πάθει.
 Χο. ἔμολε μὲν δίκᾳ Πριαμίδαις χρόνῳ, 500
 βαρύδικος ποινά·
 ἔμολε δ' ἐς δόμον τὸν Ἀγαμέμνωνος
 διπλοῦς λέων, διπλοῦς Ἄρης.
 ἔλασε δ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν
 ὁ πυθόχρηστος φυγὰς 505
 θεόθεν εὖ φραδαῖσιν ὠρμημένος.
 ἐπολολύξατ' ὦ δεσποσύνων δόμων
 ἀναφυγὰς κακῶν καὶ κτεάνων τριβᾶς
 ὑπὸ δυοῖν μισαστόροι,
 δυσοίμου τύχας. 510
 ἔμολε δ' ὧ μέλει κρυπταδίου μάχας
 δολιόφρων ποινά·
 ἔθιγε δ' ἐν μάχᾳ χερὸς ἐτήτυμος
 Διὸς κόρα—Δίκαν δέ νιν
 προσαγορεύομεν βροτοὶ τυχόντες καλῶς— 515
 ὀλέθριον πνέουσ' ἐν ἐχθροῖς κότον·

Kindled is now the light: gone is the mighty curb
Holding the house in thrall.

Up then, arise, ye halls! Grovelling on the ground
Too long have ye been lying.

Or. Behold this twofold tyranny of our land,
They that slew the father and despoiled the house.
Stately they were once, seated on their thrones,
And loving even now, as from their plight
Is manifest. True to its pledge their oath still stands.
Both swore my father's murder, and to die
Together. That too has been faithfully kept.
Behold too, ye that judge these deeds of woe,
The snare wherewith my unhappy sire was bound,
For his hands a fetter, for his feet a trap.
Open it out, and standing round, display
This man-enwrapping sheet, that so the Father,
Not mine, but he whose eye sees all things here,
The sun, may behold my mother's unclean work,
And some day at my trial may appear
To witness that I wrought this slaying justly,
My mother's, (for Aegisthus' death I count not:
His the seducer's penalty by law:)
But she who planned this horror against her lord,
Whose children she had borne beneath her girdle,
That once dear burden, proved now a deadly foe,
What think you of her? Were she sea-snake or viper,
Her touch would rot another's flesh unbitten,
If cruelty and wicked will could do it.
What can I name it, speak I ne'er so mildly?
A trap for a beast? Or else a coffin-cloth
To wrap the feet of a corpse? Nay, 'tis a net:

πάρα τὸ φῶς ἰδεῖν. μέγα τ' ἀφηρέθη
 ψάλιον οἰκετῶν,
 ἄναγε μὰν δόμοι· πολὺν ἄγαν χρόνον
 χαμαιπετεῖς ἔκεισθε. 520

Ορ. ἴδεσθε χώρας τὴν διπλὴν τυραννίδα
 πατροκτόνους τε δωμάτων πορθήτορας.
 σεμνοὶ μὲν ἦσαν ἐν θρόνοις τόθ' ἡμεῖοι,
 φίλοι δὲ καὶ νῦν, ὥς ἐπεικάσαι πάθη
 πάρεστιν, ὄρκος τ' ἐμμένει πιστώμασι. 525
 ξυνώμοσαν μὲν θάνατον ἀθλίῳ πατρὶ
 καὶ ξυνθανεῖσθαι· καὶ τὰδ' εὐόρκως ἔχει.
 ἴδεσθε δ' αὖτε, τῶνδ' ἐπήκοοι κακῶν,
 τὸ μηχανήμα, δεσμὸν ἀθλίῳ πατρί,
 πέδας τε χειροῖν καὶ ποδοῖν ξυνωρίδα. 530
 ἐκτεῖνατ' αὐτὸ καὶ κύκλῳ παρασταδὸν
 στέγαστρον ἀνδρὸς δείξαθ', ὥς ἴδῃ πατήρ,
 οὐχ οὐμός, ἀλλ' ὁ πάντ' ἐποπτεύων τάδε
 "Ἥλιος, ἄναγνα μητρὸς ἔργα τῆς ἐμῆς,
 ὥς ἂν παρῇ μοι μάρτυς ἐν δίκῃ ποτέ, 535
 ὥς τόνδ' ἐγὼ μετῆλθον ἐνδίκως μόρον
 τὸν μητρός· Λιγίσθου γὰρ οὐ λέγω μόρον·
 ἔχει γὰρ αἰσχυντήρος, ὥς νόμος, δίκην·
 ἥτις δ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τοῦτ' ἐμήσατο στύγος,
 ἐξ οὗ τέκνων ἤνεγχε' ὑπὸ ζώνην βάρος, 540
 φίλον τέως, νῦν δ' ἐχθρόν, ὥς φαίνει, κακόν,
 τί σοι δοκεῖ; μύραινά γ' εἴτ' ἔχιδν' ἔφυσήπειν
 θιγοῦσ' ἂν ἄλλον οὐ δεδηγμένον
 τόλμης ἑκατὶ κακδίκου φρονήματος.
 τί νιν προσείπω, κἂν τύχω μάλ' εὐστομῶν;
 ἄγρευμα θηρός, ἢ νεκροῦ ποδένδυτον 546
 δροίτης κατασκήνωμα; δίκτυον μὲν οὔν,

Toils you might say, or long foot-trammelling robes;
Just such a thing some cozener might contrive,
One who tricks travellers, practising the trade
Of robbery. Many with this knavish snare
Might he destroy, and his heart often glow.
With such a woman never may I share
My home. Sooner let heaven slay me, childless.

Ch. Ah me! Ah me! 'Twas a wicked deed.

By a terrible death thou art laid low.

Alas!

Woe is flowering too for the living.

Or. Did she the deed, or did she not? I call

This robe to witness, dyed by Aegisthus' sword.

'Tis gushing blood that here hath aided time

In spoiling the embroidery's many hues.

Now can I praise, now wail him where he fell:

And as I address this web that slew my sire,

I grieve for the crime, the penance, the whole race.

Such victory wins not envy, but pollution.

Ch. No mortal man may pass through his life

Without scathe, if he pay not in sorrow.

Alas!

Woe must be, to-day or hereafter.

Or. Now hear me, for I know not how it will end—

Yea, like a driver mastered by his steeds,

My restive wits are whirling me astray

Far from the course; while Terror fain would sing

To my heart, and set her dancing to his tune.

So while I am sane, proclaiming to my friends

I say, with justice did I slay my mother,

My sire's foul murderess, abhorred of heaven.

ἄρκυν τ' ἂν εἴποις καὶ ποδιστῆρας πέπλους.
 τοιοῦτον ἂν κτήσαιτο φηλήτης ἀνὴρ,
 ξένων ἀπαιόλημα κάργυροστερῇ 550
 βίον νομίζων, τῷδ' ἔτι ἂν δολώματι
 πολλοὺς ἀναιρῶν πολλὰ θερμαίνοι φρένα.
 τοιάδ' ἐμοὶ ξύννοικος ἐν δόμοισι μὴ
 γένοιτ'· ὀλοίμην πρόσθεν ἐκ θεῶν ἄπαις.

Χο. αἰαῖ αἰαῖ μελέων ἔργων· 555
 στυγερῷ θανάτῳ διεπράχθης.
 ἔἔ, μίμνοντι δὲ καὶ πάθος ἀνθεῖ.

Ορ. ἔδρασεν ἢ οὐκ ἔδρασε; μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι
 φᾶρος τόδ', ὥς ἔβαψεν Λιγίσθου ξίφος.
 φόνου δὲ κηκὶς ξὺν χρόνῳ ξυμβάλλεται, 560
 πολλὰς βαφὰς φθείρουσα τοῦ ποικίλματος.
 νῦν αὐτὸν αἰνῶ, νῦν ἀποιμώζω παρών,
 πατροκτόνον θ' ὕφασμα προσφωνῶν τόδε
 ἀλγῶ μὲν ἔργα καὶ πάθος γένος τε πᾶν,
 ἄζηλα νίκης τῆσδ' ἔχων μιάσματα. 565

Χο. οὔτις μερόπων ἀσινῇ βίοτον
 διὰ παντὸς ἀνατος ἀμείψει.
 ἔἔ, μόχθος δ' ὁ μὲν αὐτίχ', ὁ δ' ἥξει.

Ορ. ἀλλ' ὥς ἂν εἰδῇτ', οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅπη τελεῖ—
 ὥσπερ ξὺν ἵπποις ἡνιοστρόφον δρόμον 570
 ἐξωτέρω φέρουσι γὰρ νικῶμενον
 φρένες δύσαρκτοι· πρὸς δὲ καρδίᾳ φόβος
 ἄδειν ἔτοιμος ἢ δ' ὑπορχεῖσθαι κότῳ.
 ἕως δ' ἔτ' ἔμφρων εἰμί, κηρύσσω φίλοις,
 κτανεῖν τέ φημι μητέρ' οὐκ ἄνευ δίκης, 575
 πατροκτόνον μίasma καὶ θεῶν στύγος.

And for the spells that nerved me to this deed,
I cite the Pythian oracle of Loxias,
That should I act thus, I were clear of blame,
But if I failed to act—how name the penalty?
So now behold me: furnished with this bough
Enwreathed with wool, a suppliant will I go
To the mid-navel shrine, the home of Loxias,
And to that fire-light, famed imperishable,
Exiled for kindred bloodshed. To no hearth
Save his did Loxias bid me turn for refuge.
A wandering, homeless fugitive, I leave
Behind me, in life or death, such fame as this.

Ch. Nay, thou hast done well. Yoke not then thy lips
To ill-omened speech, nor utter boding words.

Or. Ah! Ah!

Bondwomen, see them yonder, Gorgon-like,
In dusky raiment, twined about with coils
Of swarming snakes! I cannot stay here more.

Ch. What fantasies toss thee, dearest of all sons
To a father? Stay: fear nothing. Thou hast vanquished.

Or. To me these horrors are no fantasies,
But indeed the sleuth-hounds of my mother's wrath.

Ch. 'Tis that the blood is yet fresh on thy hands.
Hence the confusion that invades thy soul.

Or. Sovereign Apollo, yonder they come now thronging!
And from their eyes is dripping a loathsome gore.

Ch. In, in! The purge of Loxias with a touch
Shall free thee from such visionary horrors.

Or. Ye do not see these beings, but I see them.
I am hunted by them. I can stay no more.

Ch. Blessings go with thee, and may gracious Gods
Watch over and keep thee safe with happy chance.

καὶ φίλτρα τόλμης τῆσδε πλειστηροῖζομαι
 τὸν πυθόμαντιν Λοξίαν, χρήσαντ' ἐμοὶ
 πράξαντι μὲν ταύτ' ἐκτὸς αἰτίας κακῆς
 εἶναι, παρέντα δ'—οὐκ ἐρῶ τὴν ζημίαν· 580

καὶ νῦν ὁρᾶτέ μ', ὥς παρεσκευασμένος
 ξὺν τῷδε θαλλῷ καὶ στέφει προσίξομαι
 μεσόμφαλόν θ' ἵδρυμα, Λοξίου πέδον,
 πυρός τε φέγγος ἄφθιτον κεκλημένον,
 φεύγων τόδ' αἶμα κοινόν· οὐδ' ἐφ' ἐστίαν· 585
 ἄλλην τραπέεσθαι Λοξίας ἐφίετο.

ἐγὼ δ' ἀλήτης τῆσδε γῆς ἀπόξενος,
 ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκὼς τασδε κληδονὰς λιπῶν—

Χο. ἀλλ' εὖ γ' ἔπραξας, μηδ' ἐπιζευχθῆς στόμα
 φήμη πονηρᾷ μηδ' ἐπιγλωσσῶ κακά. 590

Ορ. ᾄ, ᾄ.

δμωαὶ γυναῖκες αἶδε Γοργόνων δίκην
 φαιοχίτωνες καὶ πεπλεκτανημένοι
 πυκνοῖς δράκουσιν· οὐκέτ' ἂν μείναιμ' ἐγώ.

Χο. τίνας σὲ δόξαι, φίλτατ' ἀνθρώπων πατρί, 595
 στροβοῦσιν· ἴσχε, μὴ φοβοῦ, νικῶν πολὺ.

Ορ. οὐκ εἰσὶ δόξαι τῶνδε πημάτων ἐμοί·
 σαφῶς γὰρ αἶδε μητρὸς ἔγκοτοι κύνες.

Χο. ποταίνιον γὰρ αἷμά σοι χεροῖν ἔτι·
 ἐκ τῶνδ' εἰ τοι παραγμὸς ἐς φρένας πίτνει. 600

Ορ. ἄναξ Ἀπολλων, αἶδε πληθύνουσι δῆ,
 καὶ ξ' ὀμμάτων στάζουσιν αἶμα δυσφιλέα.

Χο. εἰς σοὶ καθαρμός· Λοξίας δὲ προσθιγῶν
 ἐλεύθερόν σε τῶνδε πημάτων κτίσει.

Ορ. ὑμεῖς μὲν οὐχ ὁρᾶτε τάσδ', ἐγὼ δ' ὁρῶ· 605
 ἐλαύνομαι δὲ κούκέτ' ἂν μείναιμ' ἐγώ.

Χο. ἀλλ' εὐτυχολίης, καὶ σ' ἐποπτεύων πρόφρων
 θεὸς φυλάσσοι καιρίοισι συμφοραῖς.

Thus again for a third time, risen from the race,
Hath a storm swept over
The house of our kings and subsided.
First was the cruel doom of the children
Slain at the banquet.
Next was the anguish of a man, of a king,
When the Achaeans' warrior chieftain
In the bath fell slain.
Now comes yet a third, a deliverer, nay,
Rather destroyer.
What end shall there be? When shall the fury
Of revenge sink lulled into slumber?

ὅδε τοι μελάρθοις τοῖς βασιλείοις
τρίτος αὖ χειμῶν

610

πνεύσας γονίας ἐτελέσθη.

παιδοβόροι μὲν πρῶτον ὑπῆρξαν
μόχθοι τάλανες·

δεύτερον ἀνδρὸς βασιλεία πάθη·

λουτροδαίκτος δ' ὄλετ' Ἀχαιῶν

615

πολέμαρχος ἀνὴρ·

νῦν δ' αὖ τρίτος ἦλθέ ποθεν σωτήρ,

ἢ μόνον εἶπω;

ποῖ δῆτα κρανεῖ, ποῖ καταλήξει

μετακοιμισθὲν μένος ἄτης;

620

THE EUMENIDES
OF
AESCHYLUS

THE EUMENIDES

[*Before the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Enter the Pythian* PROPHETESS.]

THE PROPHETESS

First of all gods I worship in my prayer
The first diviner Earth; after her Themis,
The second, legend saith, to take her seat
Here in her mother's shrine. Third in succession,
With her consent, no violence done to any,
Another Titan child of Earth took seat,
Phoebe: who as a birthday gift bestowed it
On Phoebus, bearing a name from her derived.
His mind with divine art did Zeus inspire,
And seated him, fourth prophet, on this throne,
As Loxias, spokesman of his father Zeus.
These gods I worship in my opening prayer.
Pallas our neighbour too I name with reverence.
I adore the Nymphs who haunt the caverned rock
Corycis, loved by birds, by gods frequented.
The springs of Pleistos and Poseidon's might
I invoke, and Zeus supreme, the crown of all,
Then seat myself as prophetess on my throne.
May they now bless my entrance more than ever
In past days. Let all Hellenes present here
Approach, as custom bids, by fall of lot.
As the God leads me, so do I give response.
[*The PROPHETESS enters the shrine, but quickly returns.*]
Things terrible to speak, terrible to see,
Have driven me forth again from Loxias' house.

THE EUMENIDES

[*Before the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Enter the
Pythian PROPHETESS.*]

ΠΥΘΙΑΣ

Πρῶτον μὲν εὐχῇ τῇδε πρεσβεύω θεῶν
 τὴν πρωτόμαντιν Γαῖαν· ἐκ δὲ τῆς Θέμιν,
 ἣ δὴ τὸ μητρὸς δευτέρα τόδ' ἔζετο
 μαντεῖον, ὡς λόγος τις· ἐν δὲ τῷ τρίτῳ
 λάχει, θελούσης, οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν τινός, 5
 Τιτανὶς ἄλλη παῖς Χθονὸς καθέζετο,
 Φοίβη· δίδωσι δ' ἣ γενέθλιον δόσιν
 Φοίβῳ· τὸ Φοίβης δ' ὄνομ' ἔχει παρώννυμον.
 τέχνης δέ νιν Ζεὺς ἔνθεον κτίσας φρένα
 ἵζει τέταρτον τοῖσδε μάντιν ἐν θρόνοις· 10
 Διὸς προφήτης δ' ἐστὶ Λοξίας πατρός.
 τούτους ἐν εὐχαῖς φροιμιάζομαι θεούς.
 Παλλὰς προναία δ' ἐν λόγοις πρεσβεύεται.
 σέβω δὲ νύμφας, ἔνθα Κωρυκὶς πέτρα
 κοίλῃ, φίλορνις, δαιμόνων ἀναστροφή· 15
 Πλειστοῦ τε πηγὰς καὶ Ποσειδῶνος κράτος
 καλοῦσα καὶ τέλειον ὕψιστον Δία,
 ἔπειτα μάντις ἐς θρόνους καθίζανω.
 καὶ νῦν τυχεῖν με τῶν πρὶν εἰσόδων μακρῷ
 ἄριστα δοῖεν· κεῖ παρ' Ἑλλήνων τινές, 20
 ἵτων πάλῳ λαχόντες, ὡς νομίζεται.
 μαντεύομαι γὰρ ὡς ἂν ἡγήται θεός.

[*The PROPHETESS enters the shrine, but quickly returns.*]

ἦ δεινὰ λέξαι, δεινὰ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖς δρακεῖν,
 πάλιν μ' ἔπεμψεν ἐκ δόμων τῶν Λοξίου,

When I drew near the wreath-decked inmost cell,
Upon the navel-stone I saw a man
Polluted, in a suppliant attitude.
With blood his hands were dripping, and he held
A drawn sword and a high-grown branch of olive,
Humbly enwreathed with a broad band of wool.
Between me and this man a fearful troop
Of women slumbered, seated upon chairs.
Yet not women: Gorgons call them rather.
Dusky they are, and loathsome altogether.
They snore with such blasts none may venture near;
And from their eyes a foul rheum oozes forth.
Their garb is neither fit to approach the statues
Of deities, nor to enter homes of men.
For what may ensue, let mightiest Loxias,
Who is master of this house, himself provide.
He is healing seer and judge of prodigies,
And can purge houses other than his own.

[*Exit* PROPHETESS. *The interior of the shrine is disclosed.* APOLLO, HERMES, ORESTES *and the sleeping FURIES are discovered.*]

APOLLO

I shall not fail. To the end will I protect thee.
Near shall I be, even though far away:
Nor will I prove soft to thy enemies.
Awhile thou seest yon raveners subdued.
Lo sunken in sleep the loathly virgins lie,
These hoary ancient maidens, with whom never
Hath any god mingled, nor man, nor beast.
Evil was cause of their creation, evil
The murky pit of Tartarus where they dwell
Abhorred by men and by the Olympian gods.

ἐγὼ μὲν ἔρπω πρὸς πολυστεφῇ μυχόν· 25
 ὀρώ δ' ἐπ' ὀμφαλῷ μὲν ἄνδρα θεομυσῇ
 ἔδραν ἔχοντα προστρόπαιοι, αἵματι
 στάζοντα χεῖρας καὶ νεοσπαδὲς ξίφος
 ἔχοντ' ἐλαίας θ' ὑψιγέννητον κλίδον,
 λήνει μεγίστῳ σωφρόνως ἐστεμμένοι, 30
 πρόσθεν δὲ τάνδρὸς τοῦδε θαυμαστὸς λόχος
 εὔδει γυναικῶν ἐν θρόνοισιν ἥμενος.
 οὔτοι γυναιῆκας, ἀλλὰ Γοργόνας λέγω
 ταύτας, μέλαιναι δ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν βδελύκτροποι·
 ῥέγκουσι δ' οὐ πλατοῖσι φυσιάμασιν· 35
 ἐκ δ' ὀμμάτων λείβουσι δυσφιλή λίβα·
 καὶ κόσμος οὔτε πρὸς θεῶν ἀγάλματα
 φέρειν δίκαιος οὔτ' ἐς ἀνθρώπων στέγας.
 τάντεὔθεν ἤδη τῶνδε δεσπότη δόμων
 αὐτῷ μελέσθω Λοξία μεγασθενεῖ. 40
 ἱατρόμαντις δ' ἐστὶ καὶ τερασκόπος
 καὶ τοῖσιν ἄλλοις δωμάτων καθάρσιος.

[Exit PROPHETESS. The interior of the shrine is disclosed. APOLLO, HERMES, ORESTES and the sleeping FURIES are discovered.]

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

οὔτοι προδώσω· διὰ τέλους δέ σοι φύλαξ
 ἐγγὺς παρεστὼς καὶ πρόσω δ' ἀποστατῶν
 ἐχθροῖσι τοῖς σοῖς οὐ γενήσομαι πέπων. 45
 καὶ νῦν ἀλούσας τάσδε τὰς μάργους ὀρᾷς·
 ὕπνω πεσοῦσαι δ' αἱ κατὰπτυστοι κόραι,
 γραῖαι παλαιαὶ παῖδες, αἷς οὐ μίγνυται
 θεῶν τις οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ θήρ ποτε·
 κακῶν δ' ἕκατι καγένοντ', ἐπεὶ κακὸν 50
 σκότον νέμονται Τάρταρόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονός,
 μισήματ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ θεῶν Ὀλυμπίων.

Yet do not thou grow faint, but fly far hence:
 For they will chase thee across the long mainland,
 Ever new soil beneath thy wandering tread,
 And beyond seas and past wave-girded towns.
 Let not thy heart faint brooding on thy penance,
 Till thou take refuge in the city of Pallas
 And clasp her ancient image in thy arms.
 There before judges of thy cause, with speech
 Of soothing power, we will discover means
 To set thee free for ever from these woes.
 For I did counsel thee to slay thy mother.

ORESTES

Sovereign Apollo, what is just thou knowest:
 Now therefore study to neglect it not.
 Thy power to succour needs no warranty.

Ap. Remember: let not fear subdue thy soul.
 And thou, born of one father, my own brother,
 Hermes, protect him: prove thy title true
 As Guide, by shepherding my suppliant here.
 The sanctity of an outlaw Zeus respects,
 When thus with prosperous escort he is sped.

[*APOLLO vanishes. ORESTES leaves the temple, guided
 by HERMES. Enter the GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA.*]

GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA

Sleep, would you? Shame! What need of sleepers here?
 And I by you thus held in slight regard
 Among the other dead, and followed still
 By the reproach of murder among the shades,
 Yet wronged so foully by my nearest kin,
 No spirit power shows wrath on my behalf,
 Though slaughtered by the hands of a matricide.
 Look now upon these wounds; look with thy soul.

ὅμως δὲ φεύγε, μηδὲ μαλθακὸς γένη,
 ἐλῶσι γάρ σε καὶ δι' ἡπείρου μακρᾶς
 βιβῶντ' ἄν' αἰεὶ τὴν πλανοστιβῆ χθόνα 55
 ὑπέρ τε πόντον καὶ περιρρύτας πόλεις.
 καὶ μὴ πρόκαμνε τόνδε βουκολούμενος
 πόνον· μολῶν δὲ Παλλάδος ποτὶ πτόλιν
 ἵζου παλαιὸν ἄγκαθεν λαβὼν βρέτας.
 καὶ κεῖ δικαστὴς τῶνδε καὶ θελκτηρίους 60
 μύθους ἔχοντες μηχανὰς εὐρήσομεν
 ὥστ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν σε τῶνδ' ἀπαλλάξαι πόνων.
 καὶ γὰρ κτανεῖν σ' ἔπεισα μητρῶον δέμας.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄναξ Ἀπολλων, οἶσθα μὲν τὸ μὴ ᾿δικεῖν·
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἐπίστα, καὶ τὸ μὴ ᾿μελεῖν μάθε. 65
 σθένος δὲ ποιεῖν εὖ φερέγγυον τὸ σόν.

Απ. μέμνησο, μὴ φόβος σὲ νικᾷτω φρένας.
 σὺ δ', αὐτάδελφον αἷμα καὶ κοινοῦ πατρός,
 Ἑρμῇ, φύλασσε· κάρτα δ' ὦν ἐπῶνυμος
 πομπαῖος ἴσθι, τόνδε ποιμαίνων ἐμόν 70
 ἰκέτην. σέβει τοι Ζεὺς τόδ' ἐκνόμων σέβας,
 ὁρμώμενον βροτοῖσιν εὐπόμπῳ τύχῃ.

[APOLLO vanishes. ORESTES leaves the temple, guided
 by HERMES. Enter the GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑΣ ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ

εὐδοιτ' ἄν, ὦή, καὶ καθευδουσῶν τί δεῖ;
 ἐγὼ δ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν ὧδ' ἀπητιμασμένη
 ἄλλοισιν ἐν νεκροῖσιν, ὦν μὲν ἔκτανον 75
 ὄνειδος ἐν φθιτοῖσιν οὐκ ἐκλείπεται,
 παθοῦσα δ' οὕτω δεινὰ πρὸς τῶν φιλτάτων,
 οὐδεὶς ὑπέρ μου δαιμόνων μηνίεται,
 κατασφαγείσης πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων.
 ὅρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίᾳ σέθεν· 80

For while it sleeps, the mind is lit with eyes.
Oft indeed of my offerings have you lapped,
Wineless libations, sober soothing draughts,
Dread midnight banquets, when no god but you
Is worshipped, on the altar would I sacrifice.
All this, I see, is spurned beneath your feet.
The man is gone, escaping like a fawn,
Ay, from the very snares' midst has he sprung
Lightly, making great mouths at you in scorn.
Hear me. 'Tis for my very soul I plead.
Awake, O goddesses of the nether world.
In dream now do I, Clytaemnestra, call you.

CHORUS

(Mutterings.)

Cl. Yes, whimper! But the man is gone, fled far.

Ch. (Mutterings.)

Cl. Too deep you drowse, and pity not my wrong.
Fled is Orestes, who slew me, his mother.

Ch. (Moanings.)

Cl. Whining and drowsing! Come, rise up forthwith.

Ch. (Moanings.)

Cl. Sleep and fatigue, puissant conspirators,
Have spoiled the dreadful dragoness of her might.

Ch. (Mutterings redoubled and louder.)

Follow, follow, follow, follow! Mark there!

Cl. In dream you hunt your prey, and give tongue like
A hound, whose fancy never quits the chase.
What dost thou? Arise! Let not fatigue defeat thee.
Let thy heart wince at merited rebuke,
Which to the righteous is a very goad.
Waft thou thy blood-hot breath upon the man:

εὔδουσα γὰρ φρήν ὄμμασιν λαμπρύνεται.
 ἦ πολλὰ μὲν δὴ τῶν ἐμῶν ἐλείξατε,
 χοάς τ' αἰόινους, νηφάλια μειλίγματα,
 καὶ νυκτίσεμνα δείπν' ἐπ' ἐσχάρα πυρὸς
 85 ἔθνον, ὥραν οὐδενὸς κοινήν θεῶν.
 καὶ πάντα ταῦτα λὰξ ὀρώ πατούμενα.
 ὁ δ' ἐξαλύξας οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην,
 καὶ ταῦτα κούφως ἐκ μέσων ἀρκυστάτων
 ὥρουσεν ὑμῖν ἐγκατιλλώψας μέγα.
 ἀκούσαθ' ὡς ἔλεξα τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ
 90 ψυχῆς, φρονήσατ', ὦ κατὰ χθοινὸς θεαί.
 ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμῆστρα καλῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(μυγμός.)

Κλ. μύζοιτ' ἄν, ἀνὴρ δ' οἴχεται φεύγων πρόσω.

Χο. (μυγμός.) 95

Κλ. ἄγαν ὑπνώσσεις κοῦ κατοικτίζεις πάθος·
 φονεὺς δ' Ὀρέστης τῆσδε μητρὸς οἴχεται.

Χο. (ὠγμός.)

Κλ. ὥζεις, ὑπνώσσεις· οὐκ ἀναστήσει τάχος;

Χο. (ὠγμός.) 100

Κλ. ὕπνος πόνος τε κύριοι συνωμόται
 δεινῆς δρακαίνης ἐξεκήραναν μένος.

Χο. (μυγμὸς διπλοῦς ὀξύς.)

λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβέ, φράζου.

Κλ. ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, κλαγγαίνεις δ' ἅπερ 105

κύων μέριμναν οὔ ποτ' ἐκλείπων πόνου.

τί δρᾷς; ἀνίστω, μή σε νικάτω πόνος.

ἄλγησον ἦπαρ ἐνδίκους ὀνειδέσιν·

τοῖς σῶφροσιν γὰρ ἀντίκεντρα γίγνεται.

σὺ δ' αἵματηρὸν πνεῦμ' ἐπουρίσασα τῷ, 110

Shrivel him with thy belly's fiery blast.
Follow him; wither him with a fresh pursuit.

[*Exit the GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA.*]

Ch. Awake!—Do thou wake *her*—while I wake *thee*.
Dost thou sleep? Rise; and spurning sleep afar,
Let us see if this warning dream prove false.

Behold! Behold! Oh shame! See, we have suffered
wrong!

Much painful toil have I endured, and all in vain.
Bitter indeed the wrong done to us. Oh the shame!
Defeat hard to bear! {is gone.
Our game has slipped right through the meshes, and
By sleep subdued, lo! I have lost, lost the prey.

[*APOLLO re-appears.*]

Aha, son of Zeus! Thou art a thief, and knave.
Thy youth rides trampling over elder deities.
What is thy suppliant? What but a godless man,
A cruel son? Yet him,
This matricide, thou hast stolen from us, thou, a god.
Who dares pretend—none—that such deeds are just?

Ap. Out, I command you, from these precincts! Hence
With speed! Begone from my prophetic shrine;
Lest smitten by a wingèd glistening snake
Sped from my gold-wrought bow-string, thou in
anguish
Shouldst spit forth foam darkened with human blood.
This is no dwelling fit for your approach.
Go rather where doomed heads are lopped, eyes
gouged,
Throats cut; where by destruction of the seed

ἀτμῷ κατισχναίνουσα, νηδύος πυρί,
ἔπου, μάραινε δευτέροις διώγμασιν.

[Exit the GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA.]

Χο. ἔγειρ', ἔγειρε καὶ σὺ τήνδ', ἐγὼ δὲ σέ.
εὔδεις; ἀνίστω, κάπολακτίσας ὕπνον,
ιδώμεθ' εἴ τι τοῦδε φροιμίου ματᾶ. 115

ιοὺν ἰοὺν πόπαξ. ἐπάθομεν, φίλαι,—
ἦ πολλὰ δὴ παθοῦσα καὶ μάτην ἐγώ,—
ἐπάθομεν πάθος δυσαχές, ὦ πόποι,
ἄφερτον κακόν.
ἐξ ἀρκύων πέπτωκεν οἷχεται θ' ὁ θήρ— 120
ὑπνῷ κρατηθεῖς ἄγραν ὥλεσα.

[APOLLO re-appears.]

ἰὼ παῖ Διός, ἐπὶ κλοπος πέλει,—
νέος δὲ γραίας δαίμονας καθιππᾶσω,—
τὸν ἰκέταν σέβων, ἄθεον ἄνδρα καὶ
τοκεῦσιν πικρόν, 125
τὸν μητραλοῖαν δ' ἐξέκλεψας ὦν θεός.—
τί τῶνδ' ἐρεῖ τις δικαίως ἔχειν;

Απ. ἔξω, κελεύω, τῶνδε δωμάτων τάχος
χωρεῖτ', ὑπαλλίσσεσθε μαντικῶν μυχῶν,
μὴ καὶ λαβοῦσα πτηνὸν ἀργηστήν ὄφιν, 130
χρυσηλάτου θώμιγγος ἐξορμώμενον,
ἀνῆς ὑπ' ἄλγους μέλαν' ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἀφρόν.
οὔτοι δόμοισι τοῖσδε χρίμπεσθαι πρέπει·
ἀλλ' οὗ καρανιστῆρες ὀφθαλμωρύχοι
δίκαι σφαγαί τε σπέρματός τ' ὑποφθορᾷ 135

The virile strength of boys is maimed, where men
Are sliced or stoned, or wail in long-drawn moans
Impaled beneath the spine. Do you hear me? Go,
Vile flock without a shepherd; get you hence!
For such a herd no god has love to give.

Ch. Sovereign Apollo, hear now our reply.

Thou thyself art not guilty of this in part:

Thou alone didst all; the whole guilt is thine.

Ap. How? Make that clear. I grant thee speech so far.

Ch. Thy voice enjoined this man to slay his mother.

Ap. I enjoined him to avenge his sire. What then?

Ch. We hunt forth mother-slayers from all homes.

Ap. How deal you then with wives who slay their lords?

Ch. That were no true murder of kindred blood.

Ap. Then of slight honour and no worth you make
The troth-plight between Zeus and crowning Hera.
The fate-sealed marriage bed of man and wife,
Fenced with its rights, is mightier than all oaths.
Then without justice you pursue Orestes.
But Pallas at this trial shall arbitrate.

Ch. And I, drawn by a mother's blood, pursue
This man with vengeance, till I hunt him down.

Ap. And I will aid my suppliant and protect him.
For dreaded among men and gods alike
Is the appealer's wrath, should I forsake him.

[*Exeunt omnes. The scene changes to ATHENS. Enter
ORESTES, who takes sanctuary at a shrine of
ATHENA.*]

Or. Goddess Athena, by command of Loxias
I come. Receive this outcast graciously,
No suppliant unabsolved with hand unpurged;

παίδων κακοῦται χλοῦνις, ἥδ' ἀκρωνία,
 λευσμός τε, καὶ μύζουσιν οἰκτισμὸν πολὺν
 ὑπὸ ῥάχιν παγέντες. ἄρ' ἀκούετε;
 χωρεῖτ' ἄνευ βοτῆρος αἰπολούμεναι·
 ποίμνης τοιαύτης δ' οὔτις εὐφιλὴς θεῶν. 140

Χο. ἄναξ Ἀπολλων, ἀντάκουσον ἐν μέρει.
 αὐτὸς σὺ τούτων οὐ μεταίτιος πέλει,
 ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἔπραξας ὧν παναίτιος.

Απ. πῶς δὴ; τοσοῦτο μῆκος ἔκτεινον λόγου.

Χο. ἔχρησας ὥστε τὸν ξένον μητροκτονεῖν. 145

Απ. ἔχρησα ποινὰς τοῦ πατρὸς πρᾶξαι. τί μὴν;

Χο. τοὺς μητραλοίας ἐκ δόμων ἐλαύνομεν.

Απ. τί γὰρ γυναικὸς ἦτις ἄνδρα νοσφίσῃ;

Χο. οὐκ ἂν γένοιθ' ὅμαιμος αὐθέντης φόνος.

Απ. ἦ κάρτ' ἄτιμα καὶ παρ' οὐδὲν ἡρκέσω 150

Ἥρας τελείας καὶ Διὸς πιστώματα.

εὐνὴ γὰρ ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ μόρσιμος
 ὄρκου 'στὶ μείζων τῇ δίκῃ φρουρουμένη.

οὐ φημ' Ὀρέστην σ' ἐνδίκως ἀνδρῆλατεῖν.
 δίκας δὲ Παλλὰς τῶνδ' ἐποπτεύσει θεά. 155

Χο. ἐγὼ δ', ἄγει γὰρ αἷμα μητρῶον, δίκας
 μέτειμι τόνδε φῶτα κάκκυνηγετῶ.

Απ. ἐγὼ δ' ἀρήξω τὸν ἰκέτην τε ῥύσομαι·
 δεινὴ γὰρ ἐν βροτοῖσι κὰν θεοῖς πέλει
 τοῦ προστροπαίου μῆνις, εἰ προδῶ σφ' ἐκόν. 160

[*Exeunt omnes. The scene changes to ATHENS. Enter ORESTES, who takes sanctuary at a shrine of ATHENA.*]

Ορ. ἄνασσ' Ἀθάνᾳ, Λοξίου κελεύσμασιν
 ἤκω, δέχου δὲ πρευμαενῶς ἀλάστορα,
 οὐ προστρόπαιον οὐδ' ἀφοίβαντον χέρα,

Long since the stain is dimmed and worn away
By sojournings and journeyings among men.
Obedient now to Loxias' oracles
I approach thy dwelling and thine image, Goddess.
Here clinging, will I wait my trial's end.

[*Enter the FURIES.*]

Ch. Good! Here is a clear trace of the man.
The smell of human blood smiles sweetly upon me.

Again, search again! Spy into every nook,
For fear the matricide stealthily slip from our wrath.
Yes, there again safe he lurks,
Clinging around the image of the deathless god:
Trial he now would claim for his foul handiwork.
But it may not be: a mother's blood, once spilt, is
To gather up; hard indeed. [hard
That which on earth is shed vanishes and is gone.
Now thou in turn must yield me from thy living self,
Ruddy and rich from the heart, liquor to lap: and on
I mean to thrive, evil draught though it be. [thee
I'll wither thee alive and drag thee down below,
There to atone, pang for pang, thy mother's agony.

Or. Schooled by my miseries, I have experience
In purifying rites. Where speech befits
I know, where silence too. But in this case
A wise instructor charges me to speak.
For the blood sleeps and is fading from my hand:
The stain of matricide is washed away.
While yet fresh, at divine Apollo's hearth
It was expelled by purging blood of swine.

ἀλλ' ἀμβλὺν ἤδη προστετριμμένοι τε πρὸς
 ἄλλοισιν οἴκοις καὶ πορεύμασιν βροτῶν. 165
 σφύζων ἐφετμὰς Λοξίου χρηστηρίους,
 πρόσσειμι δῶμα καὶ βρέτας τὸ σόν, θεά,
 αὐτοῦ φυλάσσω ἀμμενῶ τέλος δίκης.

[Enter the FURIES.]

Χο. εἶεν· τόδ' ἐστὶ τάνδρὸς ἐκφανὲς τέκμαρ.
 ὁσμηὶ βροτείων αἱμάτων με προσγελαῖ. 170
 ὄρα ὄρα μάλ' αὖ
 λεῦσσε τε πάντα, μὴ
 λάθῃ φύγδα βὰς
 ματροφόνος ἀτίτας.—
 ὁ δ' αὐτέ γ' ἀλκὰν ἔχων 175
 περὶ βρέτει πλεχθεὶς θεᾶς ἀμβρότου
 ὑπόδικος θέλει γενέσθαι χερῶν.—
 τὸ δ' οὐ πάρεστιν· αἶμα μητρῶν χαμαὶ
 δυσαγκόμιστον, παπαῖ,
 τὸ διερὸν πέδοι χύμενον οἴχεται.— 180
 ἀλλ' ἀντιδοῦναι δεῖ σ' ἀπὸ ζῶντος ῥοφεῖν
 ἐρυθρὸν ἐκ μελῶν πέλαγον· ἀπὸ δὲ σοῦ
 φεροίμαν βοσκὰν πώματος δυσπότου·—
 καὶ ζώντά σ' ἰσχνάνας ἀπείξομαι κάτω,
 ἀντίποιν' ὥς τίνης ματροφόνου δῦας. 185

Ορ. ἐγὼ διδαχθεὶς ἐν κακοῖς ἐπίσταμαι
 πολλοὺς καθαρμούς, καὶ λέγειν ὅπου δίκη
 σιγᾶν θ' ὁμοίως· ἐν δὲ τῷδε πράγματι
 φωνεῖν ἐτάχθην πρὸς σοφοῦ διδασκάλου·
 βρίζει γὰρ αἷμα καὶ μαραίνεται χερὸς, 190
 μητροκτόνον μίasma δ' ἔκπλυτον πέλει.
 ποταίνιον γὰρ ὃν πρὸς ἐστία θεοῦ
 Φοίβου καθαρμοῖς ἡλλάθῃ χοιροκτόνοις.

Now with pure lips, religiously, I call
On this land's Queen, Athena, that she come
Hither to aid me.
Oh haste—a god hears even from afar—
And bring with thee deliverance from these woes.

Ch. Ne'er shall Apollo nor Athena's might
Protect thee, but abandoned shalt thou perish,
Finding no place for gladness in thy soul.
Wilt thou not answer, wilt thou scorn my words,
Though for me thou art bred and consecrated?
Alive, slain at no altar, shalt thou feed me.
Now shalt thou hear a hymn to bind thee fast.

Let us now¹ with solemn step move in accord,
And show in accord
The enthralling might of our music.
Come now let us preach to the sons of men:
Yea let us tell them of our vengeance:
Yea let us all make mention of justice.
Whoso showeth hands that are undefiled,
Lo he shall suffer nought of us ever,
But shall go unharmed to his ending.
But, if he hath sinned, like unto this man,
And covereth hands that are blood-stained,
Then is our witness true to the slain man;
And we sue for the blood, sue and pursue for it,
So that at the last there is payment.

Mother mine who bare me,
Oh Mother Night,
To be feared of them who see and see not—hear!

¹ This Ode (lines 206–240) was translated by the late Dr A. W. Verrall.

καὶ νῦν ἄφ' ἄγνοῦ στόματος εὐφήμως καλῶ
 χώρας ἄνασσαν τῆσδ' Ἀθηναίαν ἐμοὶ 195
 μολεῖν ἄρωγόν.
 ἔλθοι,—κλύει δὲ καὶ πρόσωθεν ὦν θεός,—
 ὅπως γένοιτο τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ λυτήριος.

Χο. οὗτοι σ' Ἀπόλλων οὐδ' Ἀθηναίας σθένος
 ῥύσασιν· ἂν ὥστε μὴ οὐ παρημελημένον 200
 ἔρρειν, τὸ χαίρειν μὴ μαθόνθ' ὅπου φρενῶν·
 οὐδ' ἀντιφωνεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀποπτύεις λόγους
 ἐμοὶ τραφεῖς τε καὶ καθιερωμένος;
 καὶ ζῶν με δαίσεις οὐδὲ πρὸς βωμῷ σφαγεῖς·
 ὕμνον δ' ἀκούσει τόνδε δέσμιον σέθεν. 205

ἄγε δὴ καὶ χορὸν ἄψωμεν, ἐπεὶ
 μοῦσαν στυγεράν
 ἀποφαίνεσθαι δεδόκηκεν,
 λέξαι τε λάχῃ, τὰ κατ' ἀνθρώπους
 ὥς ἐπινωμᾷ στάσις ἀμά. 210
 εὐθυδίκαιοι δ' οἴόμεθ' εἶναι·
 τὸν μὲν καθαρὰς χεῖρας προνέμοντ'
 οὔτις ἐφέρπει μῆνις ἀφ' ἡμῶν,
 ἀσινῆς δ' αἰῶνα διοιχνεῖ·
 ὅστις δ' ἀλιτῶν ὥσπερ ὄδ' ἀνὴρ 215
 χεῖρας φονίας ἐπικρύπτει,
 μάρτυρες ὀρθαὶ τοῖσι θανούσιν
 παραγιγνόμεναι πράκτορες αἵματος
 αὐτῷ τελέως ἐφάνημεν.

μᾶτερ ἅ μ' ἔτικτες, ὦ μᾶτερ 220
 Νύξ, ἀλαοῖσι καὶ δεδορκόσιν ποιναίν,

The young god Apollo, he jests at our justice,
Covers yon cowering culprit, albeit a mother's blood
hath marked him mine.

Sing then the spell, Sisters of Hell;
Chant him the charm, mighty to harm,
Binding the blood, madding the mood;
Such the music that we make:
Quail, ye sons of men, and quake;
Bow the heart, and bend, and break.

Even so 'tis written

(Oh sentence sure!)

Upon all that wild in wickedness dip hand
In the blood of their birth, in the fount of their
flowing:

So shall he pine until the grave receive him—to find
no grace even in the grave.

Sing then the spell, Sisters of Hell;
Chant him the charm, mighty to harm,
Binding the blood, madding the mood;
Such the music that we make:
Quail, ye sons of men, and quake;
Bow the heart, and bend, and break.

ATHENA

I heard a suppliant cry from far away
Beside Scamander's stream.
Thence came I speeding with unwearied foot,
To the wingless rustling of my bellying aegis.
Beholding these strange visitants in my land,
The sight dismays me not, though it astounds.
Who are you? I would question all alike,
Both him who sits a suppliant at my image,
And you, so unlike aught begotten of seed.

κλυθ'. ὁ Λατοῦς γὰρ ἱνίς μ' ἄτιμον τίθησι
τόνδ' ἀφαιρούμενος
πτῶκα, ματρῶον ἄγνισμα κύριον φόνου.

ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ 225
τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,
παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς,
ὕμνος ἐξ Ἑρινύων,
δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρμικτος, αὐονὰ βροτοῖς.

τοῦτο γὰρ λάχος διανταία 230
Μοῖρ' ἐπέκλωσεν ἐμπέδως ἔχειν, θνατῶν
τοῖσιν αὐτουργίαι ξυμπέσωσιν μάταιοι,
τοῖς ὁμαρτεῖν, ὄφρ' ἂν
γᾶν ὑπέλθῃ· θανῶν δ' οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος.

ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ 235
τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,
παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς,
ὕμνος ἐξ Ἑρινύων,
δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρμικτος, αὐονὰ βροτοῖς. 240

ΑΘΗΝΑ

πρόσωθεν ἐξήκουσα κληδόνος βοῇν
ἀπὸ Σκαμάνδρου·
ἔνθεν διώκουσ' ἦλθον ἄτρυτον πόδα,
πτερῶν ἄτερ ῥοιβδοῦσα κόλπον αἰγίδος.
καινὴν δ' ὀρώσα τήνδ' ὁμιλίαν χθονὸς 245
ταρβῶ μὲν οὐδέεν, θαῦμα δ' ὄμμασιν πάρα.
τίνες ποτ' ἐστέ; πᾶσι δ' ἐς κοινὸν λέγω·
βρέτας τε τοῦμὸν τῷδ' ἐφημένῳ ξένῳ,
ὑμᾶς θ' ὁμοίας οὐδενὶ σπαρτῶν γένει.

Ch. Thou shalt hear all in brief, daughter of Zeus.
We are Night's eternal children. In our homes
Below the earth, the Curses are we called.
Slayers of men we hunt forth from all homes.

Ath. And the slayer's flight—where is the end of it?

Ch. Where happiness is no more to be found.

Ath. Is the flight such whereon you hound this man?

Ch. Yes, for he dared to be his mother's murderer.

Ath. Was there no other power, whose wrath he feared?

Ch. What goad so strong as to compel matricide?

Ath. There are two parties here, and but one plea.

Ch. Well, question him, then judge with equity.

Ath. What reply, stranger, wouldst thou make to this?
But tell me first thy country and thy lineage,
And thy misfortunes; then repel this charge.

Or. Sovereign Athena,

I seek no absolution, nor with hand

Polluted to thine image do I cling.

Long since have I been duly purified

Elsewhere, with victim and with lustral stream.

Hear now my race. In Argos was I born.

My sire, to whom thy question fitly leads,

Was Agamemnon, chieftain of warrior seamen,

With whose aid thou didst make the city of Troy

No more a city. He returning home

Died shamefully, by my black-souled mother slain,

Enveloped in a cunning snare, that still

Remained as witness of that murderous bath.

So I slew her who bare me, I deny it not,

Requiting thus my beloved father's blood.

And herein Loxias shares the guilt with me.

If I did right or no, be thou the judge.

Whate'er my fate, from thee will I accept it.

- Χο. πεύσει τὰ πάντα συντόμως, Διὸς κόρη.
 ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμεν Νυκτὸς αἰανῇ τέκνα.
 Ἄρα δ' ἐν οἴκοις γῆς ὕπαι κεκλήμεθα.
 βροτοκτονοῦντας ἐκ δόμων ἐλαύνομεν.
- Αθ. καὶ τῷ κτανόντι ποῦ τὸ τέρμα τῆς φυγῆς;
- Χο. ὅπου τὸ χαίρειν μηδαμοῦ νομίζεται. 255
- Αθ. ἦ καὶ τοιαύτας τῷδ' ἐπιρροιζεῖς φυγάς;
- Χο. φονεὺς γὰρ εἶναι μητρὸς ἡξιώσατο.
- Αθ. ἄλλαις ἀνάγκαις, ἢ τινος τρέων κότον;
- Χο. ποῦ γὰρ τοσοῦτο κέντρον ὥς μητροκτονεῖν;
- Αθ. δυοῖν παρόντων ἥμισυς λόγος πάρα. 260
- Χο. ἀλλ' ἐξέλεγχε, κρῖνε δ' εὐθείαν δίκην.
- Αθ. τί πρὸς τὰδ' εἰπεῖν, ὦ ξέν', ἐν μέρει θέλεις;
 λέξας δὲ χώραν καὶ γένος καὶ ξυμφορὰς
 τὰς σάς, ἔπειτα τόνδ' ἀμυναθοῦ ψόγον.
- Ορ. ἄνασσ' Ἀθάνα, 265
 οὐκ εἰμὶ προστρόπαιος, οὐδ' ἔχων μύσος
 πρὸς χειρὶ τῇμῃ τὸ σὸν ἐφεξόμην βρέτας.
 πάλαι πρὸς ἄλλοις ταῦτ' ἀφιερώμεθα
 οἴκοισι, καὶ βοτοῖσι καὶ ῥυτοῖς πόροις.
 γένος δὲ τοῦμὸν ὥς ἔχει πεύσει τάχα. 270
 Ἀργεῖός εἰμι, πατέρα δ' ἱστορεῖς καλῶς,
 Ἀγαμέμνον', ἀνδρῶν ναυβατῶν ἀρμόστορα·
 ξὺν ᾧ σὺ Τροίαν ἀπολιν Ἰλίου πόλιν
 ἔθηκας. ἔφθιθ' οὗτος οὐ καλῶς, μολῶν
 εἰς οἶκον· ἀλλὰ νιν κελαινόφρων ἐμή 275
 μήτηρ κατέκτα, ποικίλοις ἀγρεύμασι
 κρύψας, ἃ λουτρῶν ἐξεμαρτύρει φόνον·
 ἔκτεινα τὴν τεκοῦσαν, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι,
 ἀντικτόνοις ποινᾷσι φιλτάτου πατρός.
 καὶ τῶνδε κοινῇ Λοξίας μεταίτιος. 280
 σὺ δ' εἰ δικαίως εἶτε μὴ κρῖνον δίκην·
 πρῆξας γὰρ ἐν σοὶ πανταχῇ τὰδ' αἰνέσω.

Ath. The matter is too grave for any mortal
 To presume to try it: nor may I myself
 Lawfully judge a case of passionate murder.
 But since this cause has lighted on our city,
 I will appoint judges of murder, bound
 By oath, to be an ordinance for all time.
 When I have chosen the best among my citizens,
 I will return to sift this matter truly.

Ch. Now shall justice wholly fail¹,
 Fade and faint, cease to be,
 If the slayer's wrongful plaint,
 Here in plea, dare prevail.
 Such a deed
 Not a sinner but shall find
 All too featly to his mind.
 Give to fear her proper seat.
 Still to watch the wanton thought
 Let her sit, as just and meet:
 Sigh and tear,
 Wisdom must with these be bought.
 Praise not thou the slavish lot,
 And the lawless, praise it not,
 Praise it not.
 Blest is the mean; go thou ever between, and God
 shall prosper the going.
 Wisely sayeth the ancient rede,
 "Naughtiness gendereth pride, as the fruit of the
 But in the wholesome heart [seed":
 Good hopes, good wishes start:
 And good rewards the sowing.

¹ This Ode (lines 291-341) was translated by the late Dr A. W. Verrall.

Αθ. τὸ πρᾶγμα μείζον· εἴ τις οἶεται τὸδε
 βροτὸς δικάζειν· οὐδὲ μὴν ἐμοὶ θέμις
 φόνου διαιρεῖν ὄξυμηνίτους δίκας· 285
 ἐπεὶ δὲ πρᾶγμα δεῦρ' ἐπέσκηψεν τόδε,
 φόνων δικαστὰς ὀρκίους αἵρουμένη
 θεσμὸν τὸν εἰς ἅπαντ' ἐγὼ θήσω χρόνον.
 κρίνασα δ' ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τὰ βέλτατα
 ἦξω, διαιρεῖν τοῦτο πρᾶγμ' ἐτητύμως. 290

Χο. νῦν καταστροφαὶ νέων
 θεσμίων, εἰ κρατή-
 σει δίκη τε καὶ βλάβη
 τοῦδε ματροκτόνου.
 πάντας ἤδη τόδ' ἔργον εὐχερεῖ- 295
 α συναρμόσει βροτούς.
 ἔσθ' ὅπου τὸ δεινὸν εὖ,
 καὶ φρενῶν ἐπίσκοπον
 δεῖ μένειν καθήμενον·
 ξυμφέρει 300
 σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει.
 μήτ' ἀνάρχετον βίου
 μήτε δεσποτούμενον
 αἰνέσης.
 παντὶ μέσῳ τὸ κράτος 305
 θεὸς ὥπασεν, ἄλλ'
 ἄλλα δ' ἐφορεύει.
 ξύμμετρον δ' ἔπος λέγω,
 δυσσεβίας μὲν ὕβρις
 τέκος ὡς ἐτύμως· 310
 ἐκ δ' ὑγιεί-
 ας φρενῶν ὁ πάμφιλος
 καὶ πολύευκτος ὄλβος.

Then be this thy constant law,
Throned Right to hold in awe,
Hold in awe:
Which if thou spurn for a profit to earn, wait awhile,
then weep thy deception,
When the balance stands redrest.
Honour then father and mother, who looks to be
Give to the stranger too ' [blest;
Within the gates his due:
Let him have large reception.

Who free of will
Doeth right, shall prosper still;
Mercy comes behind him.
Destroyed quite
Sure ye shall not find him.
The bold in sin
By transgression shall not win;
Nor gathered heap
Of guilty spoil shall keep.
Perforce he scatters bulk and bale.
When from the tops the halyard drops,
When sinks the sail,—then mind him!

He prays—he raves—
Wrestles—Ah! the grasping waves
Will not be prevented,
But laugh, Aha!
Ha! for spite contented!
The fool, whose pride
Wind and waters' worst defied,
With helpless hand
Beating off he beats to land!

ἐς τὸ πᾶν δέ σοι λέγω,
 βωμὸν αἶδεσαι δίκας· 315
 μηδέ νιν
 κέρδος ἰδὼν ἀθέω
 ποδὶ λάξ ἀτίσης·
 ποινὰ γὰρ ἐπέσται.
 κύριον μένει τέλος. 320
 πρὸς τάδε τις τοκέων
 σέβας εὖ προτίων
 καὶ ξενοτί-
 μους δόμων ἐπιστροφὰς
 αἰδόμενός τις ἔστω. 325

ἐκὼν δ' ἀνάγκας ἄτερ δίκαιος ὢν
 οὐκ ἄνολβος ἔσται·
 πανώλεθρος δ' οὐποτ' ἂν γένοιτο.
 τὸν ἀντίτολμον δέ φαμι παρβάδαν
 ἄγοντα πολλὰ παντόφυρτ' ἄνευ δίκας 330
 βιαίως ξὺν χρόνῳ καθήσειν
 λαῖφος, ὅταν λάβῃ πόνος
 θραυομένας κεραίας.

καλεῖ δ' ἀκούοντας οὐδὲν ἐν μέσῃ
 δυσπαλεῖ τε δίνα· 335
 γελᾷ δὲ δαίμων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θερμῷ,
 τὸν οὐποτ' αὐχοῦντ' ἰδὼν ἀμαχάνοις
 δύναις λαπαδνὸν οὐδ' ὑπερθέοντ' ἄκραν·

One touch of fate with swift surprise
Wrecks the gay freight; he sinks, he dies,
Lost and of none lamented!

Ath. Proclaim now, Herald: bid the folk be still.
And let the Tyrrhene trumpet, with shrill note
Piercing the heavens, filled with breath of man,
Utter its high-pitched message to the throng.
In silence let my ordinance be heard
By this whole city, for all time to come,
And by these, that their suit be rightly judged.
Sovereign Apollo, rule what is thine own.
How in this business, pray, art thou concerned?

Ap. I come, first to give witness,—for my house,
My hearth received this man as suppliant,
And it was I who purged him of this murder,—
To plead too for myself; for I was cause
Of his mother's slaying. Open thou the case
In such form as thy wisdom may think best.

Ath. The word is now with you. The case is opened.

Ch. Many we are, but briefly will we speak.
Sentence for sentence do thou make reply.
Say first, art thou thy mother's murderer?

Or. I slew her. That fact there is no denying.

Ch. Of the three falls already here is one.
But how it was you slew her, you must say.

Or. I will. With a sword I stabbed her in the throat.

Ch. And who suggested, who advised the deed?

Or. The oracle of this God. He bears me witness.

Ch. Did he, the seer, prompt you to matricide?

Or. Apollo, be thou witness now: pronounce
Whether it was with justice that I slew her.

δι' αἰῶνος δὲ τὸν πρὶν ὄλβον
 ἔρματι προσβαλὼν δίκας
 ὤλετ' ἄκλαυτος, ἄστος. 340

Αθ. κήρυσσε, κήρυξ, καὶ στρατὸν κατειργαθοῦ,
 ἢ τ' οὖν διάτορος αἰθέρος Τυρσηνικῇ
 σάλπιγγ' βροτείου πνεύματος πληρουμένη
 ὑπέρτονον γήρυμα φαινέτω στρατῷ. 345
 σιγᾶν ἀρήγει καὶ μαθεῖν θεσμούςς ἐμοὺς
 πόλιν τε πᾶσαν ἐς τὸν αἰανῇ χρόνον
 καὶ τοῦσδ', ὅπως ἂν εἴ διαγνωσθῇ δίκη—
 ἄναξ Ἄπολλον, ὦν ἔχεις αὐτὸς κράτει.
 τί τοῦδε σοὶ μέτεστι πράγματος λέγε. 350

Απ. καὶ μαρτυρήσων ἦλθον—ἔστι γὰρ νόμος
 ἱκέτης ὅδ' ἀνὴρ καὶ δόμων ἐφέστιος
 ἐμῶν, φόνου δὲ τοῦδ' ἐγὼ καθάρσιος—
 καὶ ξυνδικήσων αὐτός· αἰτίαν δ' ἔχω
 τῆς τοῦδε μητρὸς τοῦ φόνου. σὺ δ' εἴσαγε 355
 ὅπως τ' ἐπίστα τήνδε κύρωσον δίκην.

Αθ. ὑμῶν ὁ μῦθος, εἰσάγω δὲ τὴν δίκην.

Χο. πολλαὶ μὲν ἐσμεν, λέξομεν δὲ συντόμως.
 ἔπος δ' ἀμείβου πρὸς ἔπος ἐν μέρει τιθεῖς.
 τὴν μητέρ' εἰπὲ πρῶτον εἰ κατέκτανας. 360

Ορ. ἔκτεινα· τούτου δ' οὔτις ἄρνησις πέλει.

Χο. ἐν μὲν τόδ' ἤδη τῶν τριῶν παλαισμάτων.
 εἰπεῖν γε μέντοι δεῖ σ' ὅπως κατέκτανες.

Ορ. λέγω· ξιφουλκῶ χειρὶ πρὸς δέρην τεμών.

Χο. πρὸς τοῦ δ' ἐπείσθης καὶ τίνος βουλευμάσι; 365

Ορ. τοῖς τοῦδε θεσφάτοισι· μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι.

Χο. ὁ μάντις ἐξηγεῖτό σοι μητροκτονεῖν;

Ορ. ἤδη σὺ μαρτύρησον. ἐξηγοῦ δέ μοι,
 Ἄπολλον, εἴ σφε σὺν δίκη κατέκτανον.

- Ap.* To you, the high court of Athena, honest
Shall be my words. A prophet may not lie.
Never from mantic throne have I said aught
Save by command of Zeus, the Olympian Father.
- Ch.* So Zeus gave thee this oracle, that bade
This Orestes to avenge his father's blood
Regardless of a mother's claim to awe?
- Ap.* Nay, it was far worse shame that a noble man,
Endowed with god-given royalty, should die,
And that by a woman's hand.
- Ch.* So a father's fate, you say, wins more respect
From Zeus, who himself enchained his old sire Cronos.
- Ap.* O loathly, brutish monsters, heaven-abhorred!
Fetters he might undo: there is cure for that;
Yea many the means to loosen what is bound.
But when the dust hath swallowed a man's blood,
Once dead, there is no raising of him then.
No healing charm hath Zeus my father made
For that: all else now high now low he shifts
And turns about with no least breath of toil.
- Ch.* See what it means, thy plea in his defence.
His mother's kindred blood he spilt on the earth.
Shall his father's house in Argos yet be his?
What altar of public worship shall he use?
What brotherhood will admit him to its rites?
- Ap.* This too will I expound; and mark how justly.
The mother of her so-called child is not
Parent, but nurse of the young life sown in her.
The male is parent: she, but a stranger to him,
Keeps safe his growing plant, unless fate blight it.
Of this truth I will show you evidence.
A sire may beget without a mother. Here

- Απ. λέξω πρὸς ὑμᾶς τόνδ' Ἀθηναίᾳς μέγαν 370
 θεσμὸν δικαίως, μίντις ὦν δ' οὐ ψεύσομαι.
 οὐπώποτ' εἶπον μαντικοῖσιν ἐν θρόνοις,
 ὃ μὴ κελεύσαι Ζεὺς Ὀλυμπίων πατήρ.
- Χο. Ζεὺς, ὥς λέγεις σύ, τοῖνδε χρησμὸν ὥπασε,
 φράζειν Ὀρέστη τῷδε, τὸν πατρός φόνον 375
 πρᾶξαντα μητρὸς μηδαμοῦ τιμὰς ἰέμειν;
- Απ. οὐ γάρ τι ταῦτὸν ἄνδρα γεῖναῖον θανεῖν
 διოსδότοις σκήπτροισι τιμαλφούμενον,
 καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς γυναικός.
- Χο. πατρός προτιμᾷ Ζεὺς μόρον τῷ σῷ λόγῳ· 380
 αὐτὸς δ' ἔδησε πατέρα πρεσβύτην Κρόνον.
- Απ. ὦ παντομισῇ κνώδαλα, στύγη θεῶν,
 πέδαι μὲν ἂν λυθεῖεν, ἔστι τοῦδ' ἄκος,
 καὶ κάρτα πολλὴ μηχανὴ λυτήριος·
 ἄνδρὸς δ' ἐπειδὰν αἰμ' ἀνασπάσῃ κόνις 385
 ἅπαξ θανόντος, οὔτις ἔστ' ἀνάστασις.
 τούτων ἐπὶ δ' οὐκ ἐποίησεν πατήρ
 οὐμός, τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω
 στρέφω· τίθησιν οὐδὲν ἀσθμαίνων μένει.
- Χο. πῶς γὰρ τὸ φεύγειν τοῦδ' ὑπερδίκεις ὄρα· 390
 τὸ μητρὸς αἰμ' ὅμαιμον ἐκχέας πέδοι
 ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀργεὶ δώματ' οἰκήσει πατρός;
 ποίοισι βωμοῖς χρώμενος τοῖς δημίοις;
 ποία δὲ χέρνιψ φρατέρων προσδέξεται;
- Απ. καὶ τοῦτο λέξω, καὶ μάθ' ὥς ὀρθῶς ἐρῶ. 395
 οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἢ κεκλημένου τέκνου
 τοκεύς, τροφὸς δὲ κύματος νεοσπόρου.
 τίκτει δ' ὁ θρώσκων, ἢ δ' ἅπερ ξένῳ ξένη
 ἔσωσεν ἔρνος, οἷσι μὴ βλάβῃ θεός.
 τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦδέ σοι δείξω λόγου· 400
 πατήρ μὲν ἂν γένοιτ' ἄνευ μητρός· πέλας

My witness stands, child of Olympian Zeus,
Who grew not in the darkness of a womb,
Yet plant so fair no goddess could bring forth.

Ath. Has enough now been said; and may I bid
These judges give their true and honest vote?

Ch. For our part, all our shafts have now been shot.
I wait to hear how the issue shall be judged.

Ath. And you? Are you content I order so?

Ap. You have heard what you have heard. Friends, give
your votes;

And let your hearts pay reverence to your oath.

Ath. Hear now my ordinance, people of Athens,
Judges of the first trial for shed blood.
Here for all time to come shall Aegeus' folk
Meet as a jurors' council on this rock,
The Hill of Ares. Thereon Reverence,
And Fear, its kinsman, among my citizens
Shall check wrong-doing night and day alike.
Neither ungoverned nor tyrannical,
Such rule I bid you venerate and maintain.
Nor wholly from the city banish dread;
For what mortal is righteous who fears naught?
Such be your reverence and your righteous awe,
And you shall have, to guard your land and town,
A bulwark such as none elsewhere possess,
Not mid the Scythians, nor in Pelops' isle.
Pure from corruption, reverend, quick to wrath,
Such the tribunal I establish here,
A vigilant guardian of the land's repose.
To exhort my citizens for times to come,
At such length have I spoken. Now let each rise
And take his ballot, and decide the cause
With reverence for his oath. My words are ended.

μάρτυς πάρεστι παῖς Ὀλυμπίου Διός,
οὐκ ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος τεθραμμένη,
ἀλλ' οἶον ἔρνος οὔτις ἂν τέκοι θεός.

Αθ. ἤδη κελεύω τούσδ' ἀπὸ γνώμης φέρειν 105
ψῆφον δικαίαν, ὡς ἄλλις λελεγμένων;

Χο. ἡμῖν μὲν ἤδη πᾶν τετόξευται βέλος.
μένω δ' ἀκούσαι πῶς ἀγὼν κριθήσεται.

Αθ. τί γάρ; πρὸς ὑμῶν πῶς τιθεῖσ' ἄμομφος ᾧ;

Απ. ἠκούσαθ' ὦν ἠκούσατ', ἐν δὲ καρδίᾳ 410
ψῆφον φέροντες ὄρκον αἰδεῖσθε, ξένοι.

Αθ. κλύοιτ' ἂν ἤδη θεσμόν, Ἀττικὸς λεῶς,
πρώτας δίκας κρίνοντες αἵματος χυτοῦ.
ἔσται δὲ καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν Αἰγέως στρατῷ
αἰεὶ δικαστῶν τοῦτο βουλευτήριον, 415

πέτρα, πάγος τ' Ἄρειος· ἐν δὲ τῷ σέβας
ἀστῶν φόβος τε ξυγγεινῆς τὸ μὴ ᾿δικεῖν
σχήσει τό τ' ἡμαρ καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην ὁμῶς.
τὸ μῆτ' ἄναρχον μήτε δεσποτούμενον
ἀστοῖς περιστέλλουσι βουλεύω σέβειν, 420

καὶ μὴ τὸ δεινὸν πᾶν πόλεως ἔξω βαλεῖν.
τίς γὰρ δεδοικῶς μηδὲν ἔνδικος βροτῶν;
τοιόνδε τοι ταρβοῦντες ἐνδίκως σέβας
ἔρυμί τε χώρας καὶ πόλεως σωτήριον
ἔχοιτ' ἂν, οἶον οὔτις ἀνθρώπων ἔχει, 425
οὔτ' ἐν Σκύθαισιν οὔτε Πέλοπος ἐν τόποις.

κερδῶν ἄθικτον τοῦτο βουλευτήριον,
αἰδοῖον, ὀξύθυμον, εὐδόντων ὑπερ
ἐγρηγορὸς φρούρημα γῆς καθίσταμαι.

ταύτην μὲν ἐξέτειν' ἐμοῖς παραίνεσιν 430
ἀστοῖσιν ἐς τὸ λοιπόν· ὀρθοῦσθαι δὲ χρῆ
καὶ ψῆφον αἶρειν καὶ διαγινῶναι δίκην
αἰδουμένους τὸν ὄρκον. εἴρηται λόγος.

Ch. Dangerous visitants are we to your land.
Do not affront us then, I counsel you.

Ap. And I say, dread my oracles, wherein
Zeus also speaks his will. Foil not their fruit.

Ch. You talk! But I, if I gain not my cause,
Will soon revisit and chastise this land.

Ap. Among the young gods and the elder too
You are despised. The victory shall be mine.

Ch. Since thy young violence over-rides our age,
I wait to hear the verdict, still in doubt
Whether to wreak my wrath against the town.

Ath. Mine shall this task be, to give judgment last;
And this my vote to Orestes will I reckon.
For of no mother was I born: in all,
Save to be wedded, with whole heart I approve
The male. I am strongly of the father's side.
Therefore a wife's fate shall I less esteem,
Who slew her husband, the master of her house.
Orestes wins, even with equal votes.
Forthwith turn out the ballots from the urns,
You judges to whom that function is assigned.

Or. O bright Apollo, how will the judgment go?

Ch. O Night, dark Mother, dost thou behold these things?

Or. For me 'tis now the noose, or life's light still.

Ch. For us, ruin, or worship without end.

Ap. Number aright the votes cast out, my friends.
As you divide them, reverence honesty.

Ath. This man is acquitted of blood-guiltiness;
For equal is the number of the lots.

Or. O Pallas! O thou saviour of my house!
Yea, thus to my lost fatherland hast thou
Restored me: and through Hellas men shall say,

- Χο. καὶ μὴν βαρεῖαν τήνδ' ὀμιλίαν χθονὸς
ξύμβουλος εἰμι μηδαμῶς ἀτιμάσαι. 435
- Απ. κᾶγωγε χρησμοὺς τοὺς ἐμούς τε καὶ Διὸς
ταρβεῖν κελεύω μηδ' ἀκαρπώτους κτίσαι.
- Χο. λέγεις· ἐγὼ δὲ μὴ τυχοῦσα τῆς δίκης
βαρεῖα χώρα τῇδ' ὀμιλήσω πάλιν.
- Απ. ἀλλ' ἔν τε τοῖς νέοισι καὶ παλαιτέροις 440
θεοῖς ἄτιμος εἶ σύ· νικήσω δ' ἐγώ.
- Χο. ἐπεὶ καθιππάζει με πρεσβῦτιν νέος,
δίκης γενέσθαι τῇσδ' ἐπήκοος μένω,
ὥς ἀμφίβουλος οὔσα θυμοῦσθαι πόλει.
- Αθ. ἐμὸν τόδ' ἔργον, λοισθίαν κρῖναι δίκην· 445
ψῆφον δ' Ὀρέστη τήνδ' ἐγὼ προσθήσομαι.
μήτηρ γὰρ οὔτις ἐστὶν ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο,
τὸ δ' ἄρσεν αἰνῶ πάντα, πλὴν γάμου τυχεῖν,
ἅπαντι θυμῷ, κάρτα δ' εἰμι τοῦ πατρός.
οὔτω γυναικὸς οὐ προτιμήσω μόρον 450
ἄνδρα κταινούσης δωμάτων ἐπίσκοπον.
νικᾷ δ' Ὀρέστης, καὶ ἰσὺ ψήφος κριθῇ.
ἐκβάλλεθ' ὥς τάχιστα τευχέων πάλους,
ὅσοις δικαστῶν τοῦτ' ἐπέσταλται τέλος.
- Ορ. ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἀπολλων, πῶς ἀγὼν κριθήσεται ; 455
- Χο. ὦ Νῦξ μέλαινα μήτερ, ἄρ' ὀρᾷς τάδε ;
- Ορ. νῦν ἀγχόνης μοι τέρματ', ἢ φάος βλέπειν.
- Χο. ἡμῖν γὰρ ἔρρειν, ἢ πρόσω τιμὰς νέμειν.
- Απ. πεμπάζετ' ὀρθῶς ἐκβολὰς ψήφων, ξένοι,
τὸ μὴ ᾽δικεῖν σέβοντες ἐν διαιρέσει. 460
- Αθ. ἀνὴρ ὅδ' ἐκπέφευγεν αἵματος δίκην·
ἶσον γάρ ἐστι τὰρίθμημα τῶν πάλων.
- Ορ. ὦ Παλλὰς, ὦ σώσασα τοὺς ἐμὸν δόμους,
γαίης πατρώας ἐστερημένον σύ τοι
κατόκιστάς με· καί τις Ἑλλήνων ἐρεῖ, 465

“He is again an Argive, and may dwell
 In his sire's heritage, by help of Pallas,
 And Loxias, last of Him who ordaineth all,
 The Saviour.” Pitying my sire's fate, he looked
 On these, my mother's advocates, and saved me.
 Farewell. May thou and this thy city's people
 Grapple your foes in a resistless grip,
 Till safety and victorious arms be yours.

[*Exit* ORESTES.]

Ch. Oh shame, ye younger deities! The old, holy laws
 Ye have ridden down, and stolen from our hands the
 prey.

But I, dishonoured, grief-afflicted, heavily wroth,
 On this land accurst
 Poison, poison, woe for woe, drops of sterile influence
 Will I drip down to earth, hot from my heart; and
 thence

Birth-killing blight, bud-withering, (Oh revenge!)
 Scattering over the ground,
 Shall sow the soil with man-destroying blots of
 Oh wail! wail!—How act now? [plague.

I am mocked, mocked.—A sore grief
 To Athens be my wrongs!
 Alas, heavy the wrongs
 We bear, Maids of Night,
 Mourning our loss of honour.

Ath. I pray you, do not grieve thus bitterly.
 You are not vanquished; but in equal votes
 The cause ends, fairly, not to your dishonour.
 Then be not passionate; hurl no wrathful threats
 Against this land, nor cause sterility

“Ἀργεῖος ἀνὴρ αὖθις ἐν τε χρήμασιν
οἰκεῖ πατρώοις, Παλλάδος καὶ Λοξίου
ἕκατι, καὶ τοῦ πάντα κραίνοντος τρίτου
σωτήηρος,” ὃς πατρώον αἰδεσθεὶς μόρον
σιώζει με, μητρὸς τάσδε συνδίκους ὄρων. 470
καὶ χαῖρε, καὶ σὺ καὶ πολιτισσοῦχος λεώς·
πάλαισμ’ ἄφυκτον τοῖς ἐναντίοις ἔχοις,
σωτήριόν τε καὶ δορὸς νικηφόρον.

[Exit ORESTES.]

Χο. ἰὼ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιοὺς νόμους
καθιππάσασθε καὶ κερῶν εἴλεσθέ μου. 475
ἐγὼ δ’ ἄτιμος ἅ τάλαινα βαρύκοτος
ἐν γὰρ τᾷδε, φεῦ,
ἰὼν ἰὼν ἀντιπενθῇ
μεθεῖσα καρδίας, σταλαγμὸν χθονὶ
ἄφορον· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ 480
λειχὴν ἄφυλλος, ἄτεκνος,
ἰὼ δίκαι, πέδον ἐπισύμενος
βροτοφθόρους κηλίδας ἐν χώρα βαλεῖ.
στενάζω; τί ρέξω;
γελῶμαι· δύσοιστα 485
πολίταις ἔπαθον·
ἰὼ μεγάλα τοι κόραι δυστυχεῖς
Νυκτὸς ἀτιμοπενθεῖς.

Λθ. ἐμοὶ πίθεσθε μὴ βαρυστόνως φέρειν.
οὐ γὰρ νενίκησθ’, ἀλλ’ ἰσούφηφος δίκη 490
ἐξήλθ’ ἀληθῶς, οὐκ ἀτιμία σέθεν·
ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ θυμοῦσθε μηδὲ τῇδε γῇ
βαρὺν κότον σκίψητε, μηδ’ ἀκαρπίαν

By shedding venomous drops of magic dew.
For here I promise you most faithfully
A cavern for your shrine in sacred ground,
Where on bright altars you shall sit enthroned,
Adored and worshipped by my citizens.

Ch. Oh wail! wail!—How act now?
I am mocked, mocked.—A sore grief
To Athens be my wrongs!
Alas, heavy the wrongs
We bear, Maids of Night,
Mourning our loss of honour.

Ath. Ye are *not* dishonoured: then restrain your wrath.
Being gods, plague not with spells a land of mortals.
I put my trust in Zeus: what need to say it?
Alone of gods I know the keys that open
The chamber where the thunder is sealed up.
But of that there is no need. Be counselled by me:
Sow not the earth with fruit of a wild tongue.
Calm the black billowing wave's fierce violence:
Become the revered partner of my home.

Ch. We to endure such a shame!
We the primaevally wise! thus domiciled, thus
Dishonouring, shameful thought! [housed!
I breathe forth passionate rage, uttermost wrath.
Oh! Oh! Shame! Foul!
What is this agony—this that assails my breast?
Hear my fury, O Mother [tricks,
Night: for the gods have robbed me by vile crafty
Stolen my ancient honours, brought low my pride.

Ath. I will indulge thy moods, for thou art elder.
But if you pass to a land of other folk,

τεύξῃτ', ἀφείσαι δαιμόνων σταλάγματα.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑμῖν πανδίκως ὑπίσχομαι
 ἔδρας τε καὶ κευθμῶνας ἐνδίκου χθονὸς
 λιπαροθρόνοισιν ἡμένας ἐπ' ἐσχάrais
 ἔξειν ὑπ' ἀστῶν τῶνδε τιμαλφουμένας.

495

Χο. στενάζω; τί ῥέξω;

γελῶμαι· δύσοιστα
 πολίταις ἔπαθον·

500

ἰὼ μεγάλα τοι κόραι δυστυχεῖς
 Νυκτὸς ἀτιμοπενθεῖς.

Αθ. οὐκ ἔστ' ἄτιμοι, μῆδ' ὑπερθύμως ἄγαν
 θεαὶ βροτῶν κτίσητε δύσκηλον χθόνα.

505

καὶ γὰρ πέποιθα Ζηνί, καὶ τί δεῖ λέγειν;
 καὶ κλῆδας οἶδα δώματος μόνῃ θεῶν,
 ἐν ᾧ κεραυνὸς ἐστὶν ἐσφραγισμένος·
 ἀλλ' οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ δεῖ· σὺ δ' εὐπιθῆς ἐμοὶ
 γλώσσης ματαίας μὴ ἑκβάλης ἔπη χθονί,
 καρπὸν φέροντα πάντα μὴ πρίσσειν καλῶς.
 κοῖμα κελαινοῦ κύματος πικρὸν μένος
 ὥς σεμνότιμος καὶ ξυνοικήτωρ ἐμοί.

510

Χο. ἐμὲ παθεῖν τάδε, φεῦ,

ἐμὲ παλαιόφρονα κατὰ τε γᾶς οἰκῆιν,
 φεῦ, ἀτίετον μύσος.

515

πνέω τοι μένος ἅπαντά τε κότον,
 οἰοῖ δᾶ, φεῦ.

τίς μ' ὑποδύεται, τίς ὀδύνα πλευράς;
 θυμὸν ἄϊε, μᾶτερ

520

Νύξ· ἀπὸ γάρ με τι-
 μᾶν δαναϊᾶν θεῶν

δυσπάλαμοι παρ' οὐδὲν ἦραν δόλοι.

Αθ. ὀργὰς ξυνοίσω σοι· γεραιτέρα γὰρ εἶ.

ὑμεῖς δ' ἐς ἀλλόφυλον ἐλθοῦσαι χθόνα

525

You will regret our Athens, I forewarn you.
For to her citizens time's stream shall flow
With larger honour; whilst thou, honourably
Enshrined by Erechtheus' temple, shalt receive
From adoring troops of men and women, more
Than thou couldst hope in the wide world beside.

Ch. We to endure such a shame!

We the primaevally wise! thus domiciled, thus
Dishonouring, shameful thought! [housed!

Ath. I will not weary of speaking thee fair words.
No, if divine Persuasion, the soothing charm
And magic of my tongue, be sacred to thee,
Then here abide: but if thou wouldst not stay,
Thou canst not justly afflict this city's folk
With wrath or hate, or do them any hurt.
For thou mayst claim thy portion in her soil
Rightfully, with all honourable worship.

Ch. Athena, what is this home thou offerest me?

Ath. One from all sorrow free. Accept it now.

Ch. Say I accept: what privilege shall be mine?

Ath. That without thee no household shall have increase.

Ch. Canst thou endow me with such power as that?

Ath. Aye, we will bless thy votaries with good fortune.

Ch. And wilt thou give me warrant for all time?

Ath. No need to promise what I would not do.

Ch. I feel thy soothing charm: my wrath abates.

We accept.

Here with Pallas let us dwell.

Scorn we not her citadel

By almighty Zeus and Ares cherished

As the fortress of the gods,

γῆς τῇσδ' ἐρασθήσεσθε· προυννέπω τάδε.
 οὔπιρρέων γὰρ τιμιώτερος χρόνος
 ἔσται πολίταις τοῖσδε. καὶ σὺ τιμίαν
 ἔδραν ἔχουσα πρὸς δόμοις Ἐρεχθέως
 τεύξει παρ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικείων στόλων, 530
 ὅσων παρ' ἄλλων οὔποτ' ἂν σχέθοις βροτῶν.

Χο. ἐμὲ παθεῖν τάδε, φεῦ,
 ἐμὲ παλαιόφρονα κατὰ τε γᾶς οἰκεῖν,
 φεῦ, ἀτίετον μύσος.

Αθ. οὔτοι καμοῦμαί σοι λέγουσα τὰγαθά. 535
 ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἀγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας,
 γλώσσης ἐμῆς μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον,
 σὺ δ' οὖν μένοις ἄν· εἰ δὲ μὴ θέλεις μένειν,
 οὗ τὰν δικαίως τῇδ' ἐπιρρέποις πόλει
 μῆνιν τιν' ἢ κότον τιν' ἢ βλάβην στρατῶ. 540
 ἔξεστι γάρ σοι τῇσδε γαμόρῳ χθονὸς
 εἶναι δικαίως ἐς τὸ πᾶν τιμωμένη.

Χο. ἄνασσ' Ἀθήνα, τίνα με φῆς ἔχειν ἔδραν;

Αθ. πάσης ἀπήμον' οἰζύος· δέχου δὲ σύ.

Χο. καὶ δὴ δέδεγμαι· τίς δέ μοι τιμὴ μένει; 545

Αθ. ὥς μὴ τιν' οἶκον εὐθενεῖν ἄνευ σέθεν.

Χο. σὺ τοῦτο πράξεις, ὥστε με σθένειν τόσον;

Αθ. τῷ γὰρ σέβοντι συμφορὰς ὀρθώσομεν.

Χο. καὶ μοι πρόπαντος ἐγγύην θήσει χρόνου;

Αθ. ἔξεστι γάρ μοι μὴ λέγειν ἢ μὴ τελῶ. 550

Χο. θέλξειν μ' ἔοικας καὶ μεθίσταμαι κότου.

δέξομαι Παλλάδος ξυνοικίαν,
 οὐδ' ἀτιμάσω πόλιν,
 τὰν καὶ Ζεὺς ὁ παγκρατὴς Ἄρης τε
 φρούριον θεῶν νέμει, 555

Crown of Hellas, guarding
The altars of her deities.

Evil breath

Never blow to hurt her trees:

Such to Athens be my grace.

Never trespass hither scorching wind

To nip the budding eyes of plants.

May no blast of sterile

Blighting plague assail her fields.

And with double births let Pan

At the appointed season bless

The mothers of the thriving flock; and may rich

Teem with abundant offspring, [Earth

Gifts to thank the bounteous gods.

Ath. Hear with what wise speech into the pathway
Of blessing they enter.

Stern and terrible though they appear, yet

Great gain shall they bring you, people of Athens.

If you repay them for kindness with kindness

And reverent worship, this shall your fame be,

To guide both your land

And city in the straight path of justice.

Ch. Joy to you, joy in the wealth that is each man's
Joy be to this city's folk! [portion!

Lovers are you, and beloved,

Of the Virgin throned by Zeus.

Timely wisdom now is yours,

Sheltered under Pallas' wings,

Sacred in the Father's eyes.

Ath. Joy to you also! But before you I go;
For now will I show you your cavern shrines

ῥυσίβωμον Ἑλλά-
νων ἄγαλμα δαιμόνων.

δενδροπήμων δὲ μὴ πνέοι βλάβα,
τὰν ἐμὰν χάριν λέγω·
φλογμός τ' ὀμματοστερῆς φυτῶν, τὸ 560
μὴ περᾶν ὄρον τόπων,
μηδ' ἄκαρπος αἰα-
νῆς ἐφερπέτω νόσος,
μῆλά τ' εὐθηνοῦντα Πᾶν
ξὺν διπλοῖσιν ἐμβρύοις 565
τρέφοι χρόνῳ τεταγμένῳ· γόνος δὲ γᾶς
πλουτόχθων ἐρμαίαν
δαιμόνων δόσιν τίοι.

Αθ. ἄρα φρονούσαι γλώσσης ἀγαθῆς
ὁδὸν εὐρίσκουσ' ; 570
ἐκ τῶν φοβερῶν τῶνδε προσώπων
μέγα κέρδος ὁρῶ τοῖσδε πολίταις·
τάσδε γὰρ εὐφρονας εὐφρονες αἰεὶ
μέγα τιμῶντες καὶ γῆν καὶ πόλιν
ὀρθοδίκαιον 575
πρέψετε πάντως διάγοντες.

Χο. χαίρετε χαίρετ' ἐν αἰσιμίαισι πλούτου.
χαίρετ' ἀστικὸς λεώς,
ἔκταρ ἡμένας Διός
παρθένου φίλας φίλοι 580
σωφρονοῦντες ἐν χρόνῳ.
Παλλάδος δ' ὑπὸ πτεροῖς
ὄντας ἄζεται πατήρ.

Αθ. χαίρετε χυμεῖς· προτέραν δ' ἐμὲ χρῆ
στείχειν θαλάμους ἀποδείξουσιν 585

By the sacred light of these your conductors.
With solemn sacrifice now let us speed you
To your homes in the earth. What will hurt this city,
Emprison it there; but whate'er bringeth gain,
Send forth to increase her with glory.
Lead now these newcomers on their way,
You my citizens, children of Kranaos:
And still in your hearts
For a kind deed let there be kind thoughts.

Ch. Joy to you, joy yet again with a double blessing,
All ye dwellers in this land
Deities and mortal men!
While in Pallas' town ye dwell,
And our rights as denizens
Reverence still, you shall not find
In your life's lot aught unkind.

Ath. Your prayers of benediction I commend,
And by bright-gleaming torch-light will conduct you
Unto your nether subterraneous homes,
Escorted by these ministrants, who guard
My image, (and with right; for 'tis the eye
Of Theseus' land), a fair-famed company
Of maidens and of wives and aged dames.
Drape now our guests in honourable robes
Of crimson. Let the lights move on before.
Erelong shall these new residents show their love
By prospering the manhood of our land.

CHORUS OF THE ESCORT

Pass on your way in the pride of your worship,
Night's dread Children, with glad-hearted escort.
(Silence now for our sacred song!)

πρὸς φῶς ἱερὸν τῶνδε προπομπῶν.
 ἴτε καὶ σφαγίων τῶνδ' ὑπὸ σεμνῶν
 κατὰ γῆς σύμεναι τὸ μὲν ἀτηρὸν
 χώρα κατέχειν, τὸ δὲ κερδαλέον
 πέμπειν πόλεως ἐπὶ νίκη. 590
 ὑμεῖς δ' ἡγεῖσθε, πολισσοῦχοι
 παῖδες Κραναοῦ, ταῖσδε μετοίκους.
 εἴη δ' ἀγαθῶν
 ἀγαθὴ διάνοια πολίταις.

Χο. χαίρετε, χαίρετε δ' αὖθις, ἔπη διπλάζω, 595
 πάντες οἱ κατὰ πτόλιν,
 δαίμονές τε καὶ βροτοί,
 Παλλάδος πόλιν νέμον-
 τες· μετοικίαν δ' ἐμὴν
 εὖ σέβοντες οὔτι μέμ- 600
 ψεσθε συμφορὰς βίου.

Αθ. αἰνῶ τε μύθους τῶνδε τῶν κατευγμάτων
 πέμψω τε φέγγει λαμπάδων σελασφόρων
 ἐς τοὺς ἔνερθε καὶ κάτω χθονὸς τόπους
 ξὺν προσπόλοισιν, αἶτε φρουροῦσιν βρέτας 605
 τοῦμὸν δικαίως. ὄμμα γὰρ πάσης χθονὸς
 Θησῆδος. ἐξίκοιτ' ἂν εὐκλεὲς λόχος
 παίδων, γυναικῶν, καὶ στόλος πρεσβυτίδων.
 φοινικοβάπτοις ἐνδυτοῖς ἐσθήμασι
 τιμᾶτε, καὶ τὸ φέγγος ὀρμίσθω πάρος, 610
 ὅπως ἂν εὐφρων ἦδ' ὀμιλία χθονὸς
 τὸ λοιπὸν εὐάνδροισι συμφοραῖς πρέπη.

ΠΡΟΠΟΜΠΟΙ

βᾶθ' ὁδόν, ὦ μεγάλοι φιλότιμοι [στρ. α.
 Νυκτὸς παῖδες, ὑπ' εὐφρονι πομπᾷ,
 εὐφραμεῖτε δέ, χωρῖται, 615

There within Earth's immemorial caverns
Ritual worship and offerings await you.
(Silence all as we wend along!)

Kind and loyal of heart to our land,
Come, ye revered ones, pleased with the festive
Flame-devoured torch, as you pass to your home.
(Cry aloud a refrain to our chorus!)

Let Peace follow with flaring of torches.
Burghers of Pallas, unto this ending
Zeus the all-seeing and Fate have conspired.
(Cry aloud a refrain to our chorus!)

γᾶς ὑπὸ κεύθεσιν ὠγυγίοισιν, [ἀντ. α.
 τιμαῖς καὶ θυσίαις περίσσεπται,
 εὐφαιμεῖτε δὲ πανδαμεῖ.

ἴλαοι δὲ καὶ εὐθύφρονες γᾶ [στρ. β.
 δεῦρ' ἴτε, σεμναί, ξὺν πυριδάπτῳ 620
 λαμπάδι τερπόμεναι καθ' ὁδόν.
 ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς.

σπονδαὶ δ' εἰσόπιν ἔνδαιδες ἴτων. [ἀντ. β.
 Παλλάδος ἀστοῖς Ζεὺς ὁ πανόπτας
 οὔτῳ Μοῖρά τε συγκατέβα. 625
 ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς.

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